THE BLUE HIGHWAY IN VÄSTERBOTTEN/SWEDEN
In the 1930s, the county governor Gustaf Rosén initiated extensive road building in the county of Västerbotten. For each metre of completed road a state grant of one Swedish crown was issued. These roads were therefore called “one-crown roads”. The roads were narrow, only 2.5 – 2.75 metres wide, and there were often no passing places. Narrow wooden road bridges were built across the waterways. These bridges still remained after the roads had been widened and they were folk humorously called “Rosén’s corsets”. This “corset bridge” was situated in Tärna.

Photo: The Road Administration, Umeå.
I sat on the horse, who stumbled on the stones every other step.”

Linné went by boat from Granö to Lycksele, but he had to carry the boat past the rapids.

“At long last we reached three rapids, situated somewhat apart, that were impossible to navigate. The farmer gives me my things, takes his lunch packet on his back and turns the boat, placing the oars across the thwart, so that each one is placed on each one of his arms, and runs with it like that over mountains and dales.”

A hundred years after Linné, in 1832, a professor from Lund, Johan Vilhelm Zetterstedt, visited Ume Lappmark. Zetterstedt and his travelling companion A.G. Dahlbom were to gather knowledge about insects in Lapland. When they went from Umeå to Lycksele they travelled by horse and carriage. During the journey from Lycksele and further into Lapland they had to use footpaths and boat on the river Umeälven. They lodged with settlers along the way. The river was vital to these settlers. Zetterstedt writes:

“Umeåelf is, as is well-known, the route on which a large part of the inhabitants of Lycksele Lappmark carry out their transports in the summer. Without her the simple and convenient communication between them would not be possible. She is the artery that flows through the country, and both near her and through her branches, she maintains life and movement.”
Highway Association) was formed in 1963 by the municipalities along the road. The road would facilitate cooperation between the municipalities and increase tourism, trade and industry.

**The Road is Christened**
At first neither the road nor the association had a name. One suggestion was “from coast to coast”. After the first meeting of the association in 1962 there was a newspaper headline “The Blue Highway Men are Waiting for Municipal Grants” and the name, which refers to the fact that the road through Sweden follows the river Umeälven, was decided.

**But it Began Much Earlier...**
Since ancient times and until quite recently, people had to use natural routes. In the summer, people walked or went by boat on rivers and waterways. Heavier transports were made in the winter when mires and lakes were frozen. Snow made it convenient to use skis. Sami walking routes followed the reindeer between the forest and the mountains. Many of these routes are still in use today.

**Two Travellers**
Carl von Linné visited Lapland in 1732. His notes tell us how people travelled in Västerbotten slightly more than 250 years ago. Linné rode and went by boat, when he wasn’t forced to walk. On May 26, 1732, Linné left Umeå to go to Lycksele. He rode to Granö and this is how he described the road:

“The road became more and more loathsome to me, and I feared for my life where
THE BLUE HIGHWAY

Across Four Countries
The Blue Highway, the E12, crosses three countries and leads into a fourth one. The road goes from Traena in Norway across the mountains towards Umeå, across the Kvarken Straits, through Finland and into Russian Karelia to its endpoint in Pudozh.

The idea of a road across these four countries was born in the 1950s. The Nordic Council wanted to increase contact between the Nordic countries by building a road between them. There was already a road between Östersund – Storlien – Trondheim. The Highway Association Vaasa – Umeå – Mo i Rana (later the Blue

Lennart Hartin, Lycksele, the initiator of the road project, on the Blue Highway. In 1973 the Highway Association’s work had yielded results and the road became a European route, at that time called E79. Foto: Erling Wikström, Västerbottens-Kuriren.
The Need for Roads Increases

As long as there has been people there has been trade. The hunters who lived in Västerbotten in ancient times had trade relations with people far away, in the east, in the west and in the south. Skin and fur from elk, reindeer, bear, beaver, marten and squirrel were important commodities.

In the 17th century the royal power’s interest in Lapland increased. The area was large and roadless. Several church and market sites were founded in order to control trade and tax enforcement more efficiently as well as to missionize among the Sami.

But these sites were not considered enough. The State wanted to further confirm Lapland as a Swedish territory. Until the late 17th century, the forest and the mountains were Sami country, and fishing and hunting grounds for the farmers by the coast. But with the “Lapland bill” in 1673, the State wanted to encourage permanent settlements and cultivation. Non-Samis were now given permission to settle in Lapland. The first settlers met an untouched landscape.

Travellers to Norway

Neo-colonization reached the Tärna area in the mid-1800s. The trading house in Mo i Rana became very important to these settlers, but also to settlers from the parishes of Sorsele and Vilhelmina. Lars Aagard Meyer founded the business in 1860. It was closer for the mountain farmers to go across the mountains to Norway than to go to the markets in Lycksele and Åsele. The ice-free harbour in Mo guaranteed a constant supply of necessities. In Norway, trade was also carried on in Kroken, Mosjöen and Saltdalen.
The merchant farmers packed their sledges twice every year with game meat, grouse, skins and butter. Ten to fifteen farmers travelled together the 120 km from Tärna to Mo. The journeys were full of hardships – both farmers and horses had to work hard. The horses were cross-breeds between North Swedish Horse and Norwegian Fjord Horse. They had great stamina and it was said that “they could endure everything but the bullet”. The road went across Umasjö and along the frozen lake Överuman to Umbukta and on down to Mo. At Meyer’s trading house people bought flour, salt, seed for sowing and textiles, but also coffee and tobacco.

The cross-border trade came to an end in the 1930s. By then communications had improved and the Swedes went to their own trading centres.

The First Roads
The colonization of Lapland created an increased demand for passable roads. The first roads in Lapland were built in the 19th century. The parish road between Umeå and Degerfors (Vindeln) was completed in 1781. The continuation of the road to Lycksele was built with the help of state grants and was opened in 1826. No real road was built between Lycksele and Stensele until 1876–1884. It followed the stretch of the old winter road. Travellers who wanted to go further into Lapland had to use winter roads, boats or simple paths.

By Boat across the Lake
There was no continuous road between Stensele and Tärna until the 1930s. Around the turn of the 20th century travellers could, however, take the steamer “Bröt-Anund” from Luspen (Storumen).

across lake Storumansjön, the 50 km to Slussfors. From there four shorter boat-trips followed, as well as road travel, before they reached Tärna. “Bröt-Anund” transported passengers and post, once or twice every week, until the 1920s. By that time two other boats took over. As the road was finished there was no longer any demand for boat traffic and it therefore ceased.

One-Crown Roads
In the 1930s, county governor Gustaf Rosén initiated an improvement of the inferior communications in the inland of Västerbotten. The county was provided with plenty of new roads through a state grant of one Swedish crown per metre of completed road. These roads were called “one-crown roads”. The road between Slussfors and Tärna, which was 70 km, was originally a “one-crown road”.

From Winter Road to International Road
In the 1880s a winter road was built from Tärna to Umbukta. There was an overnight cottage at Strimasund. In the summer, travellers were rowed from Umfors across lake Överuman to
Umbukta. In the winter, the marked winter road was used. Round the turn of the 20th century a road was built from Tärna to Umfors. A road from Mo i Rana to Umbukta had been built on the Norwegian side as early as 1892.

Between 1909 and 1922, the motor boat Övre Uman plied the 40 km long lake Överuman. Boat traffic ceased in 1939 when the road from Umfors to the Norwegian border was completed. The road on both sides of the mountain crest were now connected and one more international road was built.

On the road from Tärna to the Norwegian border around 1917. Photo: Olle Öberg, The Museum of Västerbotten.

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The Development of the Blue Highway

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<td>Year-round traffic between Umeå–Vaasa</td>
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INTERESTING SIGHTS ALONG THE WAY

- The Alpine Botanical Garden/Vindelfjällen Visitor's Center – Hemavan
- The Blue Highway
- The saga Road
- The Artway Seven Rivers
- The Inland Railway
- The Museum of Forestry
- The Museum of Swedish Forestry

INTERESTING LOCATIONS:

- Atoklimpen
- Björkvatnet
- Rutjebacken
- Gausjosjö
- Vojtajaure
- Stensele
- Tjikkiträsk
- Kirjesålandet
- Storuman
- Stenåse
- Saxnäs
- Borgafjäll
- Tärnaby
- Kåtaviken
- Ammarnäs
- Nordmaling
- Dorotea
- Överbo
- Kittelfjäll
- Lycke
- Örnsköldsvik
- Östersund
- Arvidsjaur
- Skellefteå
- Lövånger
- Robertsfors
- Malå
- Norsjö
- Bjurholm
- Vindeln
- Vilhelmina Lycksele
- Åsele
- Umeå
- Vännäs

FROM:

- Mo i Rana
- Luleå
- Örnsköldsvik
- Östersund
- Brønnøy-sund
The Ice and the Sea Shapes the Landscape

A journey along the valley of the river Umeälven offers a varied landscape, mainly formed by the latest Ice Age. Approximately 9,000 years ago, when the continental ice sheet had receded, the land began rising from the sea.

In the 18th century this was called “the disappearance of water”. Today we know that the land rises due to reduced pressure on the earth crust. The land upheaval still continues with approximately 8 mm per year by the coast and 4–5 mm per year in the mountains.

At the end of the Ice Age the sea reached much further inland than today. In the area around Lycksele, the marine limit is at 230 metres above sea level. The stretch of the Blue Highway between the coast and Lycksele runs mainly on the old sea bed.

The continental ice sheet slid over the land, transporting broken and crossed material from the bedrock. This material was deposited as moraine, which is the most common soil type in Sweden.

The Umeälven valley is the remains of a large subglacial stream from the Ice Age. Over the years, the river has cut into the ground, forming high river terraces, steep river-banks and ravines.

The landscape by the coast is young and rises slowly from the sea. Grass, herbs and grey alder are the first types of vegetation to occupy the flat beaches.

A delta appears in the mouth of the river Umeälven. The river has transported mud of clay, sand and gravel, building up a system of low islands. The delta is a resting place for thousands of birds in the spring.
The Coniferous Region

The whole area along the Blue Highway, from coast to mountain is situated in the Northern European coniferous belt, the taiga. Pine and spruce dominate. There are many large pine moors in the forest region. The ground cover on a pine moor is relatively species-poor and consists of a mat of reindeer lichen, crowberry and lingonberry sprigs. Closer to the mountains the spruce takes over. The tree crowns become narrower, as they are adjusted to the snowy climate. The taiga in northern Sweden presents many and sometimes large mires. Bog moss, brushwood, sedge, hare’s-tail cottongrass and the much sought after cloudberries grow in these wetlands.

The birch tree is a common feature in the landscape and is found in the whole county. The mountain birch, which is so characteristic of northern Scandinavia, grows in the mountains.

Västerbacken in Holmsund

Our Swedish journey begins on the flat coast by the industrial community of Holmsund. Holmsund’s origins are found at Västerbacken. In the mid-1800s a sawmill community grew up here with workers’ dwellings, manor house, church, vicarage, school, wharf and steam sawmill. There are now nine preserved workers’ dwellings at Västerbacken. One of them houses Västerbacken Sawmill Museum. The small museum depicts workdays and holidays in the life of a working-class family. Signs from the Blue Highway direct you to Västerbacken.

You should also visit Storgatan in Holmsund with its well-preserved environment of wooden houses from the 1890s with richly decorated facades along the old shopping street.

“The Blue” by Bo Setterlind

The blue – the reflections, the stillness. Gives you food for thought, and respect for life.

“The Blue” by Bo Setterlind
Bronze Age Stone Ship by Lake Mjösjön
On the way from Holmsund to Umeå you can visit an ancient Bronze Age cemetery (1500–500 BC). There is a stone ship on a small height by the small lake Mjösjön, the northernmost known in Sweden, and three, probably even older, round and oval grave mounds. Maybe a sailing merchant from the south was buried here. But that is just guesswork, since no skeleton parts have been found. Signs from the Blue Highway show the way to the Bronze Age graves.

Preserved Wooden Houses in Umeå
In the eastern and western parts of Umeå there are still buildings dating from the days before the large fire in 1888. Some examples are the old hospital (1785), the prison (1861), the Court of Appeal (1887) and wooden houses from the
1870s and 1880s just beyond the Western and Eastern Esplanades.

After the fire, new parks and esplanades were built in the town centre. Birch trees were planted along the streets to prevent the spreading of fires, and Umeå became *The Town of the Birches.* The new houses were built in a magnificent architectural style. Public buildings were built of stone, and residential houses were built mainly of timber with panelling, corner towers and pediments.

**Gammlia**

There are several museums at Gammlia. The Museum of Västerbotten depicts and exhibits the county’s history from the Stone Age and up to the present. There is, among other things, an interesting exhibition of Umeå’s development during the last century. The Swedish Ski Museum is also situated here, where you can admire the Kalvträsk ski, which is 5,200 years old, as well as Ingemar Stenmark’s slalom skis. BildMuseet exhibits visual expressions such as posters, photography and contemporary art.

**Baggböle and Arboretum Norr**

Baggböle is situated ten km upstream from Umeå. Dickson & Co, a company based in Gothenburg,
set up a sawmill community here in the 1840s. The sawmill, the workers’ dwellings and the school were situated down by the river. The manager’s residence was on the riverbank. The white manor house was completed in 1846. Baggböle sawmill is also associated with the notorious phenomenon known as “baggböleri” – buying up forest with questionable methods.

Today only the manor house and the long birch avenue remains. The house has been declared a historic building.

The Baggböle sawmill was developed in the mid-1800s and became the largest water-driven sawmill in Västerbotten. There were 150 employees there when the workforce was at its peak. The sawmill was closed down in 1885 when the new steam sawmill in Holmsund was taken in use. Photo: The Museum of Västerbotten.

Turn off the Blue Highway in Brännland and drive across the bridge towards Överboda. Then turn left and drive south. After a couple of km you are in Klabböle.
Arboretum Norr is situated below the manor house by the old sawmill site. Over 5,000 trees and bushes of more than 150 species from the northern hemisphere have been planted here, for example Veitch fir, Canadian larch and sugar maple. The purpose of the garden is to increase the supply of hardy trees and bushes in Norrland.

Klabböle Village and Umeå Energy Centre
Klabböle, across the river, retained its character of an old-fashioned farming village well into the 1950s. In Klabböle and neighbouring villages there are well-preserved farms with one-room cottages or double cottages (so-called Västerbotten houses). Outbuildings consisted of timbered barns and sheds as well as a large number of small smokehouses, indicating the importance of lamprey-fishing in the old days.

Umeå Energy Centre is situated by the old power station from 1899, with power station museum, energy exhibitions and café. Other interesting features are the old sawmill from Risliden, a Norse mill and parts of a wet slide.

Using the Power of Water
At the end of the 1800s, revolutionary news emerged in the world of electricity. In Västerbotten, the first steam power station was built in 1892. It provided Umeå with electricity for lighting. When demand increased, the town of Umeå decided to concentrate on water power. The power station in Klabböle was taken in use in 1899. Due to industrialization and the new energy-intensive industrial processes of the forest industry, the demand for electricity increased even more. Further development was necessary to meet future needs. In order to better utilize
and use the water power, the discharge of the rivers was redistributed and levelled out by river regulations. In the river Umeälven the first regulations were carried out in lake Storuman. A consequence of the regulations was that the landscape changed, whole villages were submerged and many people had to leave their farms and homes.

Today there are 18 water power stations along the river valley, which is 470 km long. These power stations produce approximately 6 millions MWh per year.

Interior from around 1905 from the power station in Klabböle. It was taken in use in 1899. The original machinery was in use until 1958 when the power station in Stornorrfors was completed. Photo: The Museum of Västerbotten.
In the early 1950s there were four power stations in Umeälven: Harrsele, Norrfors, Baggböle and Klabböle. The photo shows the construction of Harrsele power station in 1955. Behind the power station is the cleared dam area. Photo: Bertil Ekholtz, The Museum of Västerbotten.

**The Elks of Norrfors**
Signs from the Blue Highway direct you to Sweden’s most northerly known rock-carvings. The carvings which are 4–5,000 years old are situated in Norrfors. They were discovered in 1984 by archaeologists at Umeå University. There are 54 different figures on the rocks by the river.

Graphic: Johnny Augustsson, the Museum of Västerbotten.
Elks, boats, human figures and one bird have been reproduced. Many of the elks have interior details such as heart and ribs. Wooden bridges lead to the rock-carvings.

The Station Environment in Vännäs
Vännäs is a young community in an old farming region. In the 19th century, the present Vännäsby (formerly just Vännäs) was the centre of the parish. When the railway was built through the parish in the 1890s, the name Nybyn was transferred to the place where the station village developed. The railway between Långsele and Vännäs opened for public transport in 1891.

The station area comprises station building, railway hotel, goods shed and engine shed. All houses were built in 1891. There were also five residential houses for railway employees, built in the early 1920s. The railway station in Vännäs was designed by the architect Folke Zettervall. The houses were built in a characteristic style, common in the 19th century, with visible timber, dark colouring, steep roofs with wide eaves, and roof crests and roof turrets in the shape of dragon’s heads.

Vännäs Camp
Vännäs Camp is situated within walking distance from the railway station. It is a well-preserved military environment from the turn of the 20th century.

In 1892, the Westrobothnia Field Ranger Corps was reorganized into a regiment. The training ground at Gumboda Hed was too small, and new camps and more space were needed. Vännäs Camp was opened in 1900 and was in use until 1909 when the barracks at I 20 in Umeå
Only a third of Vännäs Camp’s thirty buildings remain. The character and grouping of the buildings still reflect the military hierarchy. The photo shows the barrack square surrounded by the barracks. Photo: The Museum of Västerbotten.

Hunting in Hednäs
Hunting-pits were used from the Stone Age until 1864 when the method was prohibited by law. There is an easily accessible system of hunting-pits at Hednäs near the turning to Vindeln. Some hunting-pits have been reconstructed in order to show what they might have looked like when they were used some 4,000 years ago.

The Primeval Forest in Överbo
Near the Blue Highway just downstream from Lycksele is a forest which has been untouched since the 16th century! You can easily, without
rubber boots, experience the primeval forest along the approximately 4 km long hiking trail. Here you will find all stages of a tree’s life, from seed to decay. This forest shows you what the forests in northern Sweden looked like in previous centuries.

**Gammplatsen in Lycksele**

Gammplatsen, an open-air museum, is situated by the eastern approach to Lycksele, near the Blue Highway. Ancient monuments, buildings, collections and *The Museum of Forestry* provide an understanding of the nature and culture of the inland of Västerbotten.

During excavations, archaeologists have found textiles, coins, jewellery, tools and skeletons here at Gammplatsen. Even today, remains of the Sami huts, sheds and houses that were
built by Sami people, tradesmen and other church visitors can be seen here.

The area is situated on a point of land in the river and has been a natural meeting-place throughout the centuries. A church and market site was established here in 1607. Church festivals and markets were held twice a year. More and more houses were built here and by the turn of the 19th century the area was too crowded. All buildings were therefore moved to the present town-centre of Lycksele. The area is now managed by Lycksele Hembygdsgille (Lycksele Folklore Society).

In Lycksele you can also visit a rock-painting, a distinct animal figure, perhaps an elk. The painting is located on one of the walls of the mountain of Korpberget, near Hotell Lappland.
You can listen to snoring from the darkness of the woodmen’s huts, marvel at the size of the horse’s timber load or try out a large forestry machine.

The Hunting Museum gives you an insight into how our ancestors hunted game on crusted snow and lured bears into traps.

**The Forest – Our Capital**

When you travel through the county of Västerbotten from the coast to the mountains you are constantly surrounded by forest and water. The forest has always been an important resource, providing building material, food and fuel.

The 19th century witnessed the emergence of the forest industry. The European industrialization created an increased demand for wood products. In Västerbotten there were large forests, labour and cheap transports due to log-

In the 1970s log-driving was discontinued, and transports were taken over by lorries. Sixten Johansson and Roland Dahl were present when timber was floated for the last time on Umeälven in 1980. Photo: Ulf Hägglund, Västerbottens Folkblad.
driving on the waterways. Flumes were built in swift rapids, leading the timber past the stream. Remains of these large constructions can still be seen in many places.

**Log-Driving on the River Umeälven**

Timber from forests in the inland was floated on streams and rivers down to the sawmills by the coast. The rivers in northern Sweden float the “right” way, from the northwest to the southeast. Therefore the ice break begins in the mouths of the river, which is a prerequisite for log-driving.

As far back as the 18th century, Umeälven was used for log-driving. When Baggböle sawmill was built in the early 1800s, log-driving increased. In order to facilitate the work, the river was cleared and floatway structures of wood, stone or concrete were built.

**Hay Fields in Pauliden**

Cows, sheep and goats were very important in the inland. It was therefore necessary to have a sufficient supply of winter fodder. In the 1800s, it was common to increase the fodder yield by broad irrigation of the hay fields. In the 1840s, the owner of the settlement of Trefnaden in Pausele dug irrigation canals which were several kilometres long, leading water from Paubäcken to the hay fields. In one place a canal cuts through a ridge which was five metres high!

In Pauliden you can also visit a woodman’s hut, look at a floating channel, a cycle path and a tar pile, which together give an account of forestry in the old days. You can also admire a system of hunting-pits!
Stone Age Dwelling Site by Tjikkiträsk

There are remains of two Stone Age huts on a point of land in Stora Tjikkiträsket. The huts were used as winter dwellings some 4–6,000 years ago. The hut floors are situated below ground in order to utilize the ground heat. There was a refuse bank round the huts. Coal, food scraps (burned bones) and stone splinters from tool-making were thrown on the bank. The people who lived here were nomads. They lived by hunting, fishing and gathering.

In the early 1960s an archaeological excavation of the hut-remains were made. Scrapers used for skin dressing and woodworking were found, as well as arrowheads and knives made of schist, stone pickaxes and pottery.

Turn off from the Blue Highway just south of Gunnarn. There is a sign at the crossing pointing towards Grundfors. Turn in the opposite direction. Further down the road you will find an information board.
Sweden’s Largest Wooden Church in Stensele

Sweden’s largest wooden church is situated in Stensele. The old church had become too small and the parishioners decided to build a church with room for all the 2,000 inhabitants in the parish. It was inaugurated in 1886 and has room for 1,800 sitting and 200 standing visitors.

There used to be a church town round the church. Visitors from far away built timbered houses where they could stay overnight as well as stables for their horses. Only two houses remain after a fire in 1924. They have been moved from the area.

At first the church in Stensele had simple decorations. When the church was renovated in 1934, the leaded sanctuary windows were put in. These windows as well as the altarpiece were painted by Gärda Höglund, an artist from Stockholm. Steen Flemming has designed the colour scheme. Photo: Sune Jonsson, The Museum of Västerbotten.

There is a recorded guided tour available in the church. Just press the button and listen to the history...
The County Sheriff’s Residence in Stensele
The county sheriff’s residence (Länsmansgården) in Stensele is a magnificent building erected in the 1840s. The building has a cruciform plan and is made of timber. It has two storeys and full ceiling height, which was unusual in the inland at that time. There was also a cow-house, a large barn, a woodshed and a bakehouse. The outbuildings were pulled down when farming ceased in the 1950s. The farm was built by the county sheriff A.G. Bjuhr and his future wife, J. Rådström. The remaining building is owned by Stensele Folklore Society.

The Railway Hotel in Storuman
Great changes took place when the Inland Railway and the railway from Hällnäs were built through the small village of Luspen in the 1920s. The village was renamed Storuman. The railway yard was filled up with gravel and sand. Station house, railway hotel and a number of dwellings for employees were built. All houses were built of tarred timber with shingled roofs to blend with the local building tradition.

Have a look at the station hotel! It is a remarkable environment in this area with its original décor, roof paintings and wrought-iron chandeliers. The railway hotel is now used as a library.

Untouched Mountain Forest in Storblaiken
The Storblaiken reserve is an untouched mountain forest region on the border between the municipalities of Storuman and Sorursele. There are almost no traces of forestry or forest fires here. There are several species and habitats in the old spruce forest, which are never recreated in man-made forests. There are forest motor
The Sami Territory Border and the Cultivation Line

The Sami territory border is a boundary line between the coastal region and the Sami areas in Norrbotten and Västerbotten. The boundary was drawn up in 1751–1753 in order to protect the Sami people’s hunting and fishing rights from the settlers. The Sami territory border is identical to the eastern border of the province of Lappland.

In the 19th century conflicts between Sami and settlers escalated. In order to protect reindeer breeding an administrative boundary was drawn up in 1867 between the mountain region and areas which were suitable for farming. No settlements were to be built above the cultivation line. Only reindeer breeding was to be carried on there. In spite of this, settlements were built above the boundary line. These illegal settlements were later legalized. Even today this boundary serves a purpose. According to the Reindeer Husbandry Act the Sami herding districts must keep their reindeer above the cultivation line from May 1st until October 1st. The rest of the year they are allowed to keep their reindeer in the forest region.

Kirjesålandet’s Primeval Forest

Go hiking in Kirjesålandet – a forest area that was never affected by the large forest fellings round the turn of the 20th century!
This coniferous forest is practically untouched with pine trees that are 600 years old and spruces that are 300 years old. The area is for most parts covered by impressive spruce forests with pendulous lichens and some standing dead trees and storm-felled trees. There is old pine forest on moraine ridges towards Kirjesån, and the lower parts of the slopes are covered by birch forests.

The hiking trail between Sakkats and Kirjesålandet is four km long and begins at the parking lot by the lower part of the lake Nedre Boksjön.

**Björkvattdalen**

Make a little detour from the Blue Highway and visit Björkvattdalen, the first valley in the Tärna area which was inhabited by settlers. In 1824, the settlements of Rönnbäck and Ängesdal were inspected and approved by Abraham Persson.
But according to local tradition the first settler was the Sami Sjul Sjulsson. Sjulsson’s cottage has been preserved in Ängesdal.

Björkvattnet’s valley was Tärna’s most fertile valley. Barley and potato grew better on these southern slopes than in other places.

Björkvattdalen is now a large retention dam which is connected with lake Gardiken. In spite of the regulation there is an open landscape in the mountain valley with genuine timber houses with turf roofs from the late 1800s and the early 1900s. Many houses were originally Sami settlements.

Vojtjajaure Chapel

In Björkvattdalen you can visit the chapel in Vojtjajaure. It was designed by Albert Julius Björk and built in 1932–33 by local villagers. As early as 1924, it was decided that the people in Björkvattdalen would have a church with a church town, graveyard and school. Today there are a few church cottages left, and every summer there is a church festival one Sunday in July.

Hunting-Pits in Solberg

There is an easily accessible system of hunting-pits in Solberg. One of the 24 pits is dated to the 9th century AD. The pits were dug in a sand ridge extending across the wild reindeer’s migration route. The reindeers were led towards the covered pits with the help of fences. The pits have caved in and are smaller now than when they were in use. There is a path leading to the pits from the Laisholm road.
Atoklimpen – A Holy Mountain

The mountain of Atoklimpen, Áduovárdduo, is situated far into the Joesjö valley by the Norwegian border. The mountain has a characteristically marked pointed shape. The mountain top consists of serpentine stone, a species of rock that weathers with difficulty. The soil contains large amounts of nickel and chrome, and therefore many common alpine plants and lichens can’t grow here. The rocks are rounded due to the continental ice sheet and the mountain has a special type of weathering rind, known as elephant skin.

Klimpen is a holy mountain according to an old Sami tradition. There were probably several Sami places of sacrifice near the mountain top.

Atostugan is situated by the foot of the mountain. It was built by the Sami family Klementsson in the early 1920s. Later the cottage became the home of the school teacher. Until 1945 there used to be a hut school for Sami children here.
Alpine Plants in Hemavan

There are more than 400 alpine plants in their natural environment in the Alpine Botanical Garden in Hemavan. Almost all of the mountain’s beautiful flowers bloom in the beginning of July. The indigenous species dominate along the disabled-adapted paths, but there are also specimens of rare alpine plants here.

The garden is situated near Vindelfjällen Visitor’s center – where you can learn more about Sweden’s largest nature reserve.

Ruttjebäcken

Take a walk along the stream Ruttjebäcken. The path begins by the bridge across Ruttjebäcken near Rönäs. After a couple of hundred metres you can leave the path and walk on the cliffs. For thousands of years the water has cut into the soft mountain. Walk around and look for giant’s kettles, tunnels, canals and imaginative cuts in the soft schist. There are also mountain avens, yellow mountain saxifrage and other plants that favour calcareous soils. Further along the path, by Rödingnäset you will get a magnificent view of Tängvattdalen.
Imaginative House Builders in Umasjö
There are two unusual houses in Umasjö. One house is a stone cow-house and the other house is built of birch-tree logs. When this area was settled, timber was scarce above the coniferous tree limit, and it was therefore difficult to build houses here.

The walls of the stone cow-house are made of flat rocks of slate while the attic is timbered. The year 1859 has been etched into the roof ridge.

The house made of birch-tree logs was built in the 1880s. The house is the only one of its kind in the county of Västerbotten. In other parts of the country, in Norway and in North America there are similar examples. In the 1930s, when the international road was built, the house was used as a café.

Lake Gausjosjön with Sami Encampment
Stop by in Strimasund and walk across the suspension bridges to the western shores of lake Gausjosjön! There is a footpath here leading to two different Sami encampments. The first was built by Northern Samis who were forced to
move here from Karesuando in the 1920s. The spring and autumn encampment of Sotsbäcken is situated further south and this is where the original Southern Samis lived. Both encampments have been renovated and there are examples of huts, sheds and cellars that were common in the encampments.

The area is still used today. In the summer, this is the reindeer pasture of the Sami village of Umbyn.

The Cave Path in Kåtaviken
The mountains round Överuman are among the richest in caves in the whole country. The caves were discovered and investigated in the late 1960s. There is a four kilometre long path by Kåtaviken which enables you to visit different types of caves and other geological formations. The hiking trail is easy walking and requires no special equipment. However, if you want to enter the caves you need equipment. Never walk alone into a cave!
Sights in the County of Västerbotten

Today’s tourists are becoming more and more interested in genuine natural and cultural environments. Being a tourist is being curious! Working with natural and cultural tourism means arousing and satisfying the tourist’s curiosity. And that is what the project Sights in the County of Västerbotten is all about. It is a joint project between the County Administrative Board and the museums in the county.

The project’s fundamental objective is to develop “visitors’ centres”. Through exhibitions, slideshows etc, the curious visitors will learn more about the nature and the culture of a particular sight – how the culture has been formed by nature and vice versa.

But visitors’ centres contain more than just spiritual nourishment. There is also refreshments, shops, warmth or coolness; a stop on the way or a starting-point for new expeditions. From the mountains to the coast, from the past to the present – there are a lot of sights in the county of Västerbotten.

The Blue Highway

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