

TRAIL GUIDE: **Ájlisvárre**

Height 720 m.a.s.l. WGS84 66°19'21.9"N 18°4'12.1"E SWEREF99 TM 7359262, 637530

Ájlisvárre is located by the Pite River in a cultural landscape that has a long and interesting history. According to legend, one of the peaks is an old Sámi sacrificial with a seite – a Sámi holy stone – on top.

Directions: 38 km from Arjeplog, towards Norra Bergnäs. Just after the village Hällnäs, turn left onto a forest road. Please make a copy of the Swedish National Land Survey's map beforehand, or bring another one. There are no signs. Drive the forest road 1.1 km until it ends, where it's possible to park.

Height: 720 m.a.s.l.

Distance to the top: 1.5 km. Alternatively 2.7 km.

Hiking: Easy and intermediate. Some stretches are steep. We recommend hiking in from the east side, but it's also possible to hike up from the west. That route is longer, however.

Shelter: None.

Equipment: In dry weather you can walk in trainers. Please bring water as there are no streams along the hike. There is a small lake at the top. It's a good idea to bring a map and compass.

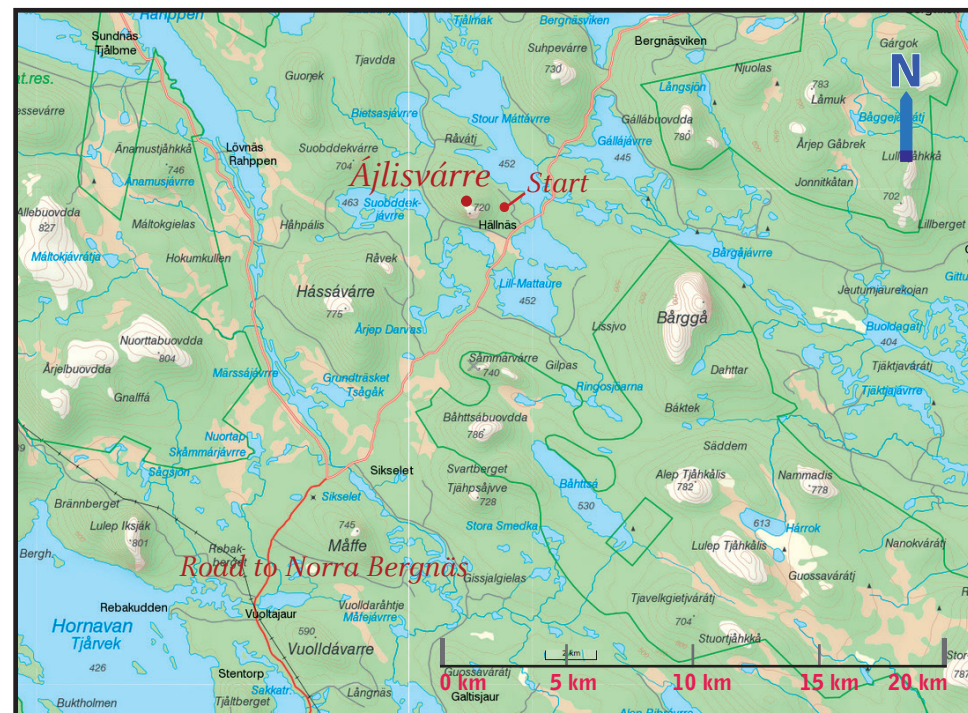
Nature: From a pine forest at the start featuring blueberries, lingonberries and crowberries, where traces of felling and planting can be seen, to mixed forest along the slopes nearest the top with pine, spruce and mountain birch. At the top rocks and larger boulders intermingle with mountain-heath mosses, low-growing dwarf birch and purple mountain heather.

View: From Ájlisvárre you can see a vast landscape surrounded by smaller and larger lakes. The mighty mountain massif extends to the north. Seijdvárre – with peaks that are 800-900 m.a.s.l., and Rásska 1,456 m.a.s.l. and Vadnjalis 1,514 m.a.s.l.

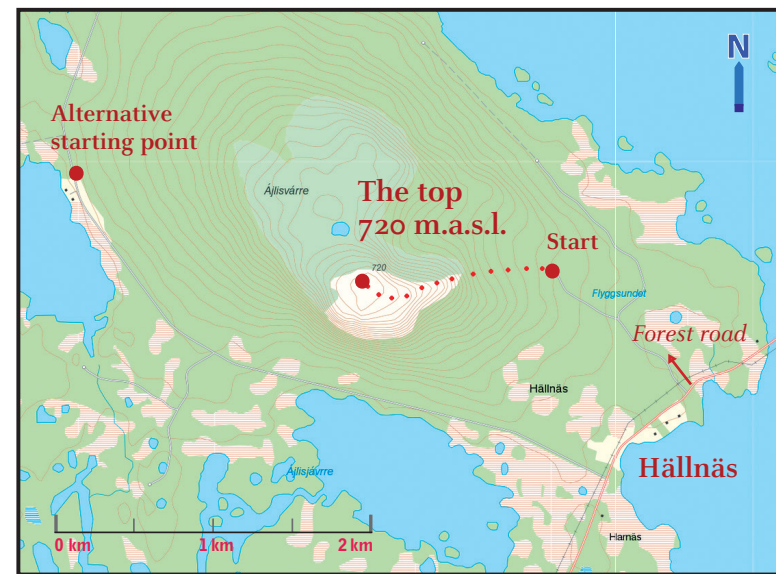
Animals: Around Ájlisvárre there is elk, reindeer and fox; in rare cases you can catch a glimpse of bear, lynx and wolverine. Otter used to be common in the water-rich area, but they all but disappeared from the 1960s and onwards, likely due to hunting and environmental toxins. The population is, however, well on the way to recovery here in the area around the Pite river.



Mixed forest at the foot of Ájlisvárre.



Ájlisvárre offers exciting boulders and cliffs.



Birds: With a bit of luck you can catch a glimpse of golden eagle, peregrine falcon and rough-legged buzzard. Other birds that can be found in the forests are wood grouse, black grouse, kestrel, Siberian jay (known as gagsagka in the local dialect), fieldfare, mountain finch, willow tit and greenfinch, to name a few.

Fishing: The Pite River has always been known for its excellent fishing, especially for grayling. The waters between Skierfajaure and Saddajaure – located near Ájlisvárre with the mighty Apmo waterfalls – are great fishing waters where there is a large population of trout in addition to the grayling. The waters between Vuolvojaure and Jäknajaure are the most famous ones, however, not least due to fishing expert Gunnar Westrin's depictions of the area: "Masses of caddisfly larvae and pupae live here, the main food item for grayling in the Pite River. There is no large river in the north that can show such a diversity of trichoptera as this authentic, mighty river in the heart of the northern taiga forest". He also writes:

"Apart from a rich grayling life there are also huge trout hiding in the August night. Giant trout weighing in at over ten kilos have been caught and every year anglers get to contend with proper-size trout".

Fishing guide: *Arjeplog – a guide to a fishing paradise* is available at the Tourist Office or www.arjeplog.se.



View from Ájlisvárre's north-eastern side with Lake Stor-Mattaure and the mountain area Siejdvárre.

A glimpse of history: The Pite River area is a cultural landscape with a long and interesting history. Remains have been found here from the Stone Age and onwards. Sámi have travelled with their reindeer along the river area and in the mountains for hundreds of years. The northernmost peak of Ájlisvárre's three is believed by many to be an old sacrificial site with a holy stone – a seite. A seite is normally an unusually shaped rock, or a cliff. The seite cult came to an end as the Sámi were Christianised during the 17th century. Many seites were destroyed though actions by authorities and priests. There is none on Ájlisvárre today.

In modern times the peak is known as the peak you hike to during the midsummer weekend.

PHOTO PRIVATE VIVI-ANNE LESTANDER



A unique life story is that of joik-singer Margreta Nilsson (1865-1957). She married Lars Bengtsson in 1887. Many of the couple's descendants live in the Pite River area today. Margreta Bengtsson became widely known for her joiking. Her joiks would be about people, life and – as in this case – girls who herd reindeer:

"Yes, the herding girls of yore didn't tire, nor fall asleep, they weren't afraid to get their shoes and shoe ribbons wet, they wouldn't let anything stop them, they just herded and joiked, herding, herding".



View from the north side of Ájlisvárre. The nearest peak is Suobddekjåvve, 704 m.a.s.l. Northwest of it are lakes Rahppen and Lábbás.

Every islet, bay, shoal and depth usually has a name that's rarely seen on the map: Rappen-kalles, Rävångudden, Larses more, Rackgrunne and Trolltjånna to name but a few. The Rappen-Labbas association have identified names around the lakes and thus preserved a cultural heritage that might otherwise be forgotten.



By the Vuojat-hut in Sundnäs by Lake Rahppen there is a bulletin board with a map showing the various names.

Source: Oral, Nationalencyklopedin and the publication *Silvrevägen* 2014.

Accommodation: The nearest cabins, rooms and campsites can be found in Arjeplog. Contact Arjeplog Tourist Office for more information.

What does the right of public access mean?

The main rule of the unique right of public access is **do not disturb – do not destroy**. Please keep the following in mind:

- You are allowed to hike almost anywhere, but not on plots and plantations, and around private residences.
- Use provided fireplaces when making fires, if possible, and never light a fire when it is dry or very windy. You are not allowed to use fallen trees for fuel, or cut down trees or shrubs, or remove twigs, branches or bark from living trees.
- You are not allowed to hunt, disturb, capture or harm animals, their young, their nests or their eggs. Dogs are not allowed off leash from 1 March until 20 August, when animals have their young. Dogs must be prevented from running loose in areas with game and reindeer.
- Show particular respect to reindeer husbandry in the mountains and forests near Arjeplog. Experience reindeer from a distance. Respect reindeer herders' working space and privacy near dwellings and reindeer enclosures. If you are caught up in reindeer herding, keep away and try to make as little noise as possible until the herd has moved on.
- You are allowed to pick wild flowers, berries and mushrooms, but first check which plants are protected. Specific rules apply in reserves and national parks specific. It is not allowed to chip or knock stones out of place, or carve your name onto stone slabs. You may take a few smaller, loose stones.
- If you see any rubbish – please pick it up!

Source: www.naturvardsverket.se. You can download the brochure: "Protected species of plants and animals in Sweden" (2012).



Natura 2000

Natura 2000 is a network for Europe's most valuable habitats. In Arjeplog municipality there are 22 areas, including Akkelis, Björknäs, Daita, Granberget, Hornavan-Sadvajaure, Laisdalen Valley, Laisälven River, Långsjön-Gåbrek, Märkberget, Nimtek, Pieljekaise, Pite River, Rakåive, Ramanj, Ståkke-Bårgå, Sulitelma, Tjeggelvas, Tjålmejaure, Udtja, Veddek and the Yraf delta.