



Plan for safe travel in Salla during the COVID-19 pandemic

*Salla tourism risk management model for safety hazards caused by
infections.*

Salla
In the middle of nowhere

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Tourism in Salla

Salla is located in the middle of a vast wilderness in Eastern Lapland, north of the Arctic Circle and close to the Russian border. Salla is not only a tourist centre but also a Lappish municipality with about 3,400 permanent residents. The municipality covers an area of 5,872 km², making Salla one of the most sparsely populated areas in Continental Europe (0.6 residents per km²).

While tourism in the area is mainly focused around the Sallatunturi fell, the nature destinations in northern and southern Salla also see a steady flow of visitors in the summer. The tourism and shopping services in the centre of Salla are frequently used by travellers. In a normal year, about 135,000 overnight stays are registered in Salla, about 30% of which are attributed to international tourists. In addition to commercial accommodation, Salla also features privately owned holiday homes.

Primarily, travelling to and around Salla is safe. Tourism-related risk management has already been conducted in the area for a long time, and a tourism safety plan has been prepared in cooperation with the authorities. Tourists usually spend about four to seven days in Salla, one of the longest stays in Lapland. The region has a very limited selection of tour products where tourists move between areas. Most of the accommodation capacity consists of cottages and apartments where the customers can spend time with their group. The group sizes used in tourist activities have always been quite small, and particular attention is paid to this during the COVID-19 pandemic. The ski slopes and tracks are not congested and the customers are able to maintain the recommended safe distances.

This plans reviews some of the hazardous points in the tourist's path as well as measures to minimise the risk of infection in businesses and in the area.

Salla also promotes the acquisition of rapid testing equipment

Salla uses a coronavirus rapid antigen test, the response of which is completed in about 20 minutes. If necessary, a PCR test can also be taken and tested at Nordlab Rovaniemi Laboratory.

In connection with sampling, written instructions on quarantine-related conditions and an exposure mapping form shall be provided. Sample results are generally completed after 2-3 days. The doctor will call the person being tested for the result of the coronavirus test

When coronavirus rapid antigen is sampled, written instructions are given depending on whether the test result is negative or positive.



In the event of a positive response, the person will be informed that the infection tracer will call immediately and, along with the person, begin tracing the infection and mapping the exposed. The PCR test result is usually completed after 2-3 days and the person who took the test is called for health care.

1. Plan for safe travel in Salla during the COVID-19 epidemic

The plan for safe travel in Salla during the COVID-19 pandemic has been prepared in cooperation with the local businesses, tourism stakeholders, international travel agencies and Paula Kaakkurivaara, Municipal Physician of Salla. In the autumn of 2020, two workshops were organised to prepare the plan for safe travel in Salla during the COVID-19 pandemic. The plan is based on a risk management model approved by the Lapland Hospital District (Appendix 1). The model covers the customer's entire path from airport to airport.

The model was originally prepared for international package holiday customers but can be partially applied to Finnish tourists as well. The path for international customers is predetermined and the adventure agencies mainly draw up the timetable for the activities before the customer arrives. This makes it easier to prepare a risk assessment and risk management model. Finnish customers are independent travellers whose customer path is not known in advance. Measures in line with the plan can be used to improve the safety of both Finnish and international tourists, local residents and workers.

The plan accounts for the infection risks on the tourist's path and presents examples of reducing the risks through various measures in the Salla tourism services. When managing the risk of exposure, it is important to remember the time limit of more than 15 minutes spent in the same room. Different companies have adopted different methods, and the measures in this plan are examples of the measures conducted by businesses. For detailed, company-specific measures, please visit visitsalla.fi/xxxx.



The operational model for Salla is implemented in cooperation with the municipal primary health care services (contact person Municipal Physician Paula Kaakkurivaara) and the party in charge of the COVID-19 situation analysis and epidemic prevention in the Lapland Hospital District (Markku Broas, Chief Physician, infectious diseases, Lapland Hospital District). In accordance with the Finnish Communicable Diseases Act, in addition to its monitoring duties, the Regional State Administrative Agency for Lapland coordinates the activities of various authorities, when necessary, and makes administrative decisions in matters concerning multiple municipalities, for example.

The plan is valid until further notice. The plan will be updated when necessary and after the winter season in the spring of 2021 at the latest, whereupon dry-land activities will also be taken into consideration.

1.1. Customer path

The plan covers the customer's path from airport to airport in accordance with the model published by the Finnish Lapland Tourist Board ry.

International tourists arrive in Salla through either Kuusamo or Rovaniemi Airport. Most of the international customers arrive on direct charter flights organised by a travel agency from the Netherlands, Spain or the UK, for example. Some arrive on direct regular flights (for example, Lufthansa flights from Frankfurt to Kuusamo) or on Finnair's regular flights via Helsinki. The customers arriving on charter flights are taken to Salla by bus with their group. The customers arriving on regular flights use the public airport bus transport.

The buses take the customers directly to their accommodation. Customers usually spend four to seven days in Salla, using accommodation, activity and restaurant services during their stay.

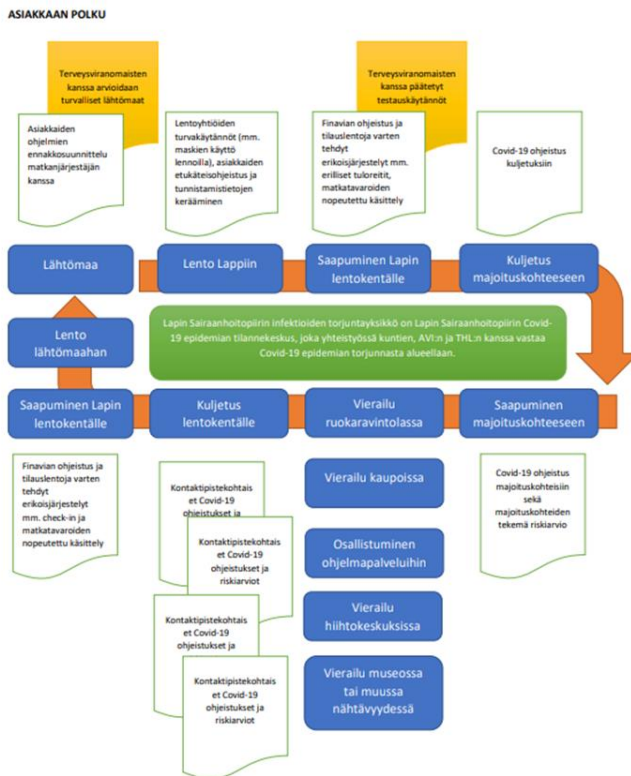


Image 1. Customer path. Source: Finnish Lapland Tourist Board ry. COVID-19 risk management model for tourist destinations in Lapland.

1.2. Documentation

The travel agencies and tourism companies cooperate in documenting the contact information and schedules of all the tourists, including the activity schedules. Should the customer group come into contact with other people or visit an indoor location, the start and end times of the visit/contact must be recorded. The information is stored for 14 days to enable tracking potential chains of infection.

2. Contact point-specific risk assessment in the customer path and measures for minimising risks

The identified contact points on the path of international customers in the area are presented below. As companies' measures of minimising risks vary, the measures presented in this plan are examples

of measures implemented in companies. Company-specific measures are presented in the risk management model of each company as well as at visitsalla.fi/xxxx.

Contact points between tourists, with the locals and with workers in the tourism industry have been taken into consideration in the risk assessment and measures. The purpose of the measures is to improve the safety of all of the aforementioned. The responsibilities and occupational health and safety of tourism company employees are discussed in further detail in the risk management model for tourist destinations in Lapland (Appendix 1).

2.1. Airport

International tourists travelling to Salla arrive through either Kuusamo or Rovaniemi Airport. The airport and the airlines have their own safety instructions and policies. At the airport, the customers are received by their driver and/or guide. The customers, the guide and the driver wear masks both at the airport and during the bus ride.

[Finavia's instructions for airline passengers](#)

2.2. Transport

Salla's international customers use transportation services when travelling from the airport to Salla and back. In addition, there are transportation services between the activity venues and the accommodation as well as shopping rides to the centre of Salla a couple of times per week. International customers do not usually independently use transportation services (such as taxis or local buses); instead, all of their transportation is organised by companies, making it easy to improve travel safety with the measures below.

Contact point: Transport Risk level: Medium high + Risks	Measure
During transport, the customers are in close contact for more than 15 minutes	The driver and the customers must wear masks
Buses are closed indoor spaces where virus particles can spread among the passengers	The customers and workers wear masks
Shopping trips	Limiting the customer capacity in buses
Taxis are closed indoor spaces where virus particles can spread among the passengers	Customers are asked to gather outdoors for their pickup
	The driver is the first to exit and the last to enter

	Frequently touched surfaces cleaned in between transportations
	Agreeing on the timing of the visits with the shopkeepers so that the shop is empty of other customers. Surfaces disinfected after the visit.
	Groceries ordered online and delivered to the cottages (the webshop of K-market Puolukka is currently only available in Finnish but includes pictures of the products).
	Limiting the customer capacity in taxis. Members of the same family or group travel together.

2.3. Accommodation

In Salla, most of the international customers stay in cottages or apartments with their family, spouse or travelling party. Some stay in the hotel rooms of Holiday Club Salla. The only contact points in terms of accommodations are the reception services.

Contact point: Reception Risk level: Low Risk	Measures
Customers queueing indoors, safe distances difficult to monitor, close contact may exceed 15 minutes	Adopting remote check-in for all customers and, if necessary, admitting only one person at a time in the reception area (per each family)
The receptionists are in close contact with customers for 15 minutes or longer	Keys delivered to the hotel rooms/cottages to wait for the customers
Bacteria spreading via keys	Protective plastic screen at the reception desk between the receptionists and customers
	Customers and workers must wear masks indoors
	Using floor stickers to mark safe distances
	Customers keep the keys for the duration of their stay, after which the keys are disinfected
	A hand sanitiser dispenser is placed in the lobby. There are also bottles of hand sanitiser at the reception desk.
	Room/apartment keys are placed in an envelope marked with the customer's name

	Customers are instructed to contact the accommodation service provider via e-mail or telephone if they have questions or if they wish to book an activity
Leaving the apartment, check-out	Keys disinfected
	Accommodation disinfected between stays

2.4. Activities

Several contact points have been identified in activities in terms of, for example, clothing and gear, issuing safety instructions, safaris, rental equipment, etc. Most of the international customers use the overalls and other gear throughout their stay in Salla, meaning that the contact point for clothing and gear is only repeated once during the holiday. In Salla, activities tend to have a longer-than-average duration and small group sizes, even in regular conditions.

Contact point: Clothing Risk level: medium high + / normal Risks	Measures
Customers spend more than 15 minutes indoors and in close contact with other customers or workers	Managing and scheduling the changing room so that it is used by one family at a time
Changing clothes may cause people to get out of breath	The workers and customers wear masks when putting on or taking off gear

Viruses may spread via clothes	The clothes are treated for viruses: washable balaclavas, for example, are washed in 60°C, shoes and helmets are disinfected, overalls and gloves are heated to 60°C for at least 30 minutes
	The workers must wear sufficient protective equipment when receiving and handling clothing and gear
	Disinfected clothing must be clearly marked and stored in a different space than dirty clothing to avoid mix-ups
	Personal gloves and balaclavas bought for all customers in cooperation with some of the travel agencies

Contact points: Issuing safety instructions Risk level: Low, normal Risks	Measures
Verbal instructions given to the customers	Safety instructions issued outdoors with safe distances
Over 15 minutes spent in an indoor auditorium	Large size of the auditorium, keeping safe distances
	Both the workers and the customers wear masks

Contact point: Meals outdoors Risk level: normal Risks	Measures
The customers sit too close together when eating outdoors	Ensuring safe distances between the customers
Customers sit too close together in front of the campfire	The workers portion out the food and butter the bread in advance for the customers
The food is served as a buffet, enabling viruses to spread via surfaces	The workers wear masks and disposable gloves when preparing and handing out the food
Viruses may spread via dirty dishes	The workers collect the dirty dishes in a container and ensure proper hand hygiene. The dirty dishes are washed in the restaurant kitchen as any other dishes.

Contact point: Snowmobile sleigh safaris Risk level: Low/normal Risks	Measures
Picking up helmets may result in close contact with a customer	When picking up helmets, the customer and worker wear masks. Workers must keep a safe distance from the customer.
Customers from different parties/families placed in the same sleigh	Members of different parties/families: observe a safe distance
An accident or an unexpected situation may result in close contact when tending to/helping a customer	In accidents or unexpected situations, pay particular attention to personal protection (masks, rubber gloves always in the first aid kit). Any gear with blood and/or secretion on them must be isolated, washed and disinfected properly. In the event of CPR, do not perform mouth-to-mouth resuscitation during the pandemic (official instructions from Finnish Red Cross)
Viruses may spread via helmets	Disinfecting helmets and storing dirty gear separately from clean gear

Contact point: Guided cross-country skiing & snowshoeing Risk level: Normal Risks	Measures
Close contact with workers or other customers when handing out gear	Customers and workers wear masks when picking up gear
An accident or an unexpected situation may result in close contact when tending to/helping a customer	Workers must keep a safe distance from the customer
Viruses may spread via gear	In accidents or unexpected situations, pay particular attention to personal protection (masks, rubber gloves always in the first aid kit). Any gear with blood and/or secretion on them must be isolated, washed and disinfected properly. In the event of CPR, do not perform mouth-to-mouth resuscitation during the pandemic (official instructions from Finnish Red Cross)
	Ski boots and gear disinfected and dirty gear stored separately from clean gear

Contact point: Husky and reindeer safaris Risk level: low/normal Risks	Measures
Two customers from different parties/families share a sleigh	Members of different parties/families may not share a sleigh; they must ride separately
An accident or an unexpected situation may result in close contact when tending to/helping a customer	In accidents or unexpected situations, pay particular attention to personal protection (masks, rubber gloves always in the first aid kit). Any gear with blood and/or secretion on them must be isolated, washed and disinfected properly. In the event of CPR, do not perform mouth-to-mouth resuscitation during the pandemic (official instructions from Finnish Red Cross)

Contact point: Renting gear Risk level: normal Risks	Measures
Close contact with workers or other customers when handing out gear	When picking up gear, customers and workers wear a mask or a balaclava/tube scarf in front of their face
Viruses may spread via gear	Gear disinfected and dirty gear stored separately from clean gear

2.5. Restaurants

The health and safety instructions of the Lapland tourism and restaurant industry are complied with in Salla's restaurant services. See the instructions on the koronaturvallinenlappi.fi/en/home/ site. There are no actual nightclubs in Salla, but the pubs and restaurants occasionally organise music events and disco nights.

Contact point: Meals in restaurants & visits to pubs Risk level: Low/normal Risks	Measures
Customers spend more than 15 minutes indoors and in potential close contact with workers	Protective plastic screen at the restaurant's cash register. Workers wear masks, customers wear masks when not eating



Loud discussion increases the risk of infection	Lowering the noise level in the restaurant. Instructing customers to talk quietly.
Viruses may spread via dirty dishes and other surfaces	Customers and workers are instructed to use the Koronavilkku application. The names and contact information of all the customers in the restaurants are collected and stored for 14 days in a locked facility to ensure easy tracking in the event of a potential chain of infection. After this, the information is disposed of.
	Restaurants must pay attention to sufficient ventilation and filtration as well as the customer's option of staying in a certain area or in their own group when eating at the restaurant.
	Tables and other surfaces cleaned every 2–4 hours or whenever customers leave the table
	Disinfectant available in all restaurant facilities
	Safe distances marked on the floors where people queue
	Group dining scheduled and tables placed within a safe distance from each other.
	The kitchen staff preparing the food must use a protective plastic screen or wear a mask
	Dishes must be washed immediately after use. Any frequently touched surfaces in the buffet must be regularly disinfected and the servers replaced several times during the day. Proper hand hygiene must be ensured when handling dirty dishes.
	The menus and check holders are disinfected after each customer.
	Protective plastic screen at the bar's cash register Customers are instructed to leave some seats empty between different groups and keep a safe distance

2.6. Ski Resort

Salla Ski Resort complies with the COVID-19 safety guidelines of the Finnish Ski Area Association. Link to the guidelines: <https://www.ski.fi/en/info/ski-slope-safety/covid-19/>.

2.7. Sports services

Most of the sports and activities take place outdoors where it is easy to keep a safe distance. Salla's ski tracks, slopes and hiking trails are not packed with people.

The Sports Centre and the bowling alley are some of the places offering indoor sports services for tourists.

Tähän tulossa kunnalta taulukko....

2.8. Sauna and spa services

Contact point: Saunas & spa Risk level: low Risks	Measures
Customers spend more than 15 minutes indoors	Instructions explaining the maximum number of people allowed in the facilities at a time
Viruses may spread via surfaces	Frequently touched surfaces cleaned regularly
	Instructions explaining the use of the sauna: clean yourself before entering the sauna, use disposable seat covers, etc.
	A hand sanitiser dispenser in the spa lobby and bottles of hand sanitiser in the locker rooms.
	The spa's customer volume has been limited to ensure a safe distance. When using the spa services, keep a safe distance from other customers in the shower and pool areas

2.9. Museum

Tähän tekstiä kunnalta....



2.10. Shopping

There is a grocery kiosk at the Holiday Club reception in the Salla tourist centre where tourists can buy some basic groceries. International tourists are usually offered the option of a bus ride to the centre of Salla for some shopping once or twice during their stay.

Contact point: Shopping Risk level: Medium high + Risks	Measure
Contact indoors, duration over 15 minutes.	Hand sanitiser is available in the shops.
	The customers and workers wear masks
	Protective plastic screens have been installed at the cash registers of the large grocery shops.
	The timing of the shopping trips can be agreed with the shopkeeper so that there are few customers in the shop/the shop is empty of customers.
	Groceries ordered online and delivered to the cottages (the webshop of K-market Puolukka is currently only available in Finnish but includes pictures of the products).

2.11. Events

Parties organising events in the Salla region are asked to contact Matkalle Sallaan ry – Travelling in Salla Association. Event organisers are instructed to pay attention to the valid event guidelines of the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare and the Regional State Administrative Agencies and to prepare a risk analysis and risk management model for the event. The risk management model must be delivered to Salla Municipal Physician Paula Kaakkurivaara: paula.kaakkurivaara@salla.fi.

3. Testing and illness

Travelling to Salla is possible if allowed by the travel policies of Finland and the traveller's country of departure.

For more information on travel policies, please visit:

<https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/entry-restrictions>



<https://um.fi/entering-finland-and-travelling-abroad>

<https://www.raja.fi/coronavirus>

All travellers are advised to take out a travel insurance and learn about the terms and conditions of their insurance!

3.1. Testing

The Government's decision on testing travellers is complied with in Salla. At the moment, testing procedures are being prepared to take place either at the airport or in Salla. Salla also aims to procure a rapid testing system.

Salla is operating under the principle of low-threshold testing. If a traveller suspects that they have been infected with the coronavirus, they must book a COVID-19 testing appointment at the Salla social and healthcare centre.

Telephone number: +358 (0)45 665 3454

Open Mon–Sun from 7.30 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Symptoms of a coronavirus infection may include:

- runny nose, cough, fever, difficulty breathing;
- muscle ache, tiredness;
- nausea, diarrhoea; or
- loss of taste or smell

The examination and treatment of a highly contagious disease are free of charge, which is why the customer is not charged for the test or the appointment. After testing, the customer receives written instructions on quarantine-like conditions and a form for analysing their exposure. The test results usually take about two or three days. The customer receives the test results via a telephone call from the physician.

3.2. Tourist falling ill during their trip

A patient who has tested positive for COVID-19 must be immediately isolated. The isolation lasts from seven to ten days, depending on the patient's symptoms. The municipal physician in charge of communicable diseases makes the decision on the isolation based on the Finnish Communicable Diseases Act. The physician in charge of communicable diseases assesses the patient's close contact in detail.

If the patient does not require inpatient care, they are offered a separate isolation facility, such as a cottage or a hotel room. The patient's family or similar party may be accommodated in the same unit



upon the discretion of the authorities in charge of communicable diseases. Healthcare authorities are responsible for contacting/monitoring the isolated patient and their care services are provided in cooperation with the social and healthcare authorities and tourism companies. The healthcare authorities in charge of communicable diseases provide instructions on the implementation of health security.

Patients requiring monitoring are treated at the acute and rehabilitation unit of Salla social and healthcare centre or in the Lapland Central Hospital in Rovaniemi.

3.3. Quarantine for those exposed to a patient who has tested positive for COVID-19

The municipal authorities in charge of communicable diseases find out who have been exposed to the patient who has tested positive for COVID-19 and order them to quarantine in accordance with the Finnish Communicable Diseases Act. The information collected and stored by tourism companies concerning the schedules and participants of customer groups is used for tracking exposure. Those exposed are advised to avoid social contact and travel and to monitor their symptoms for 10 days after the most recent exposure. In family exposure, the duration of quarantine is 14 days (2 weeks) from the start of the symptoms or symptomless. They are offered a separate isolation facility, such as a cottage or a hotel room. Their care services of quarantined individuals are provided in cooperation with the healthcare authorities. The healthcare authorities in charge of communicable diseases provide instructions on the implementation of health security.

The food supply of quarantined individuals can be organised as a catering service or as a doorstep grocery delivery service. Salla has several restaurants offering catering services, and the K-market webshop enables customers to order a bag of groceries to their doorstep.

4. Communications

4.1. Communications to workers and local residents

The businesses instruct their employees to comply with valid COVID-19 safety guidelines. As employees are hired at different times, it is difficult to find the time to instruct and train all the employees at the same time. The company's own risk management model and the plan for safe travel in Salla during the COVID-19 pandemic are used in the training.

Local residents receive information on the COVID-19 safety measures in Salla's tourism business via the local press and the communication channels of Salla's tourism services.



4.2. Communications to customers

The customers receive regional information via the websites of Salla's tourism services and digital information displays. A section on safety during the pandemic is added to the website of Salla's tourism industry, presenting the companies' risk management models and answers to frequently asked questions. Matkalle Sallaan ry – Travelling in Salla Association also produces printed materials on safety so that companies can use them at their premises.

Close cooperation is conducted with international travel agencies in communicating safety guidelines to international customers arriving in Salla. It is important that the customer knows the traveller's safety-related responsibilities (masks, protective equipment, etc.) when booking their trip. This prevents customer dissatisfaction and potential claims for damages. The plan for safe travel in Salla is translated to English and delivered to all the cooperation partners.

4.3. Crisis communications

We will do everything we can to minimise the risks, but if chains of infection occur, the physician in charge of communicable diseases holds the primary responsibility for communicating the crisis. Municipal Physician Paula Kaakkurivaara is responsible for communications related to communicable diseases in Salla. Otherwise, the crisis communications guidelines in the plan for safe travel in Salla are complied with.

5. Links

[COVID-19-safe Lapland](#)

[Guidelines of the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare \(THL\)](#)

[Guidelines of the Lapland Hospital District](#)

[Guidelines of the Regional State Administrative Agencies](#)

[Guidelines of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration in Finland](#)

[Information of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health](#)

