

# TRAIL GUIDE: Lulep Iksjåk

Height: 801 m.a.s.l. WGS84 66°12'27.9"N 17°45'3.2"E SWEREF99 TM 7345786, 623805

A forest road takes you to the foot of Lulep Iksjåk, which has a twin mountain: Alep Iksjåk. Lulep means eastern in Sámi, and Alep western. Both peaks boast stunning views and a welcoming nature.

**Directions:** Drive towards Norra Bergnäs, 20 km from Arjeplog. Turn left at an open single-bar gate. It's the first gravel road you get to, approximately 500 m after a road sign for Rebackudden. Watch out for sharp stones on the forest road. After 5.5 km you'll see a small timber bridge across the road ditch to your left; park on the right.

**Height:** 801 m.a.s.l. The twin peak Alep Iksjåk is 789 m.a.s.l.

**Distance to the top:** 2.2 km

**Hiking:** Easy and intermediate. Recommended for children.

**Equipment:** Boots/rubber boots recommended as parts are marshland. A map and compass can come in handy.

**Path:** there is a well-marked trail to a marsh, about 1 km. After that you hike upwards to the left, in a south-easterly direction.

**View:** Across Hornavan with its mountain archipelago. In clear weather you can see the border mountains to the west.

**Shelter:** There is none. If strong winds are blowing you can seek shelter next to large boulders. By the slope, in the soft terrain, is a good spot for a picnic.

**Reserve:** Hornavan-Sädvajaure old-growth mountain forest reserve expands to the north. The reserve's fauna is rich, and natural forests, south-west facing slopes and chalk areas have great botanical value. The unexploited forest ecosystem is a unique area in Europe. The forest mainly consists of sparse, low-growth pine forest with large elements of mountain birch. The age spread is marked, but an older generation of 200-450 year-old pines dominates. Iksjåk's peaks are located in an area mainly visited by hunters, berry pickers and a few hikers. Ståkke Sámi association carry out reindeer husbandry in the vicinity.

**Animals:** Wildlife is rich, but it can be difficult to spot animals during a hike. There's elk, reindeer, fox and smaller rodents. Very rarely sighted are lynx, wolverine and bear.

**Birds:** There are golden eagles and rough-legged buzzards in the area, but more commonly seen are Siberian jay, golden plover and dotterel. Other species found to a greater or lesser extent are mountain finch, bluethroat, willow grouse, redpoll, willow warbler, redstart and redwing.

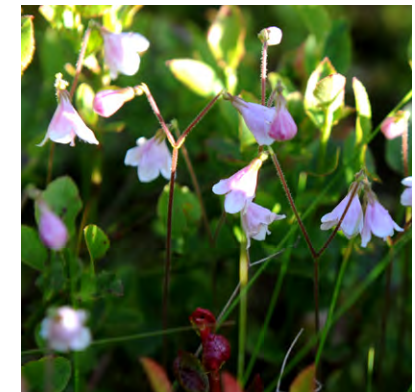


Near the top of Alep Iksjåk there is a so-called 'laying hen', a boulder perched on three smaller rocks. Artwork courtesy of the inland ice.



View of Arjeplog and Hornavan from Lulep Iksjåk.

Plenty of twin flowers, *Linnaea borealis*, grow on the moss-clad slopes in metre-long tendrils. It was Carl Linnaeus's favourite flower and he was often portrayed with a twin flower in his hand. It was also featured on his coat of arms.



**Flowers:** In early summer you can see kingcup and globeflower – often near wetlands. On the mountain slopes you can spot yellow mountain saxifrage, pincushion plant, purple mountain saxifrage, hairy lousewort, Arctic yellow violet, alpine bistort, snow gentian, purple mountain heather, twinflower and Lapland lousewort. In late summer, the statuesque northern wolfsbane and alpine sow-thistle take over.



Lapland lousewort  
*Pedicularis lapponica*



The northern part of Lulep Iksjåk is steep.

The area around the top is full of exciting formations. The inland ice melted, carved through and polished the mountain chain with enormous power. There is a steep side to Lulep Iksjåk that is constantly changing. It's known as frost blasting, common in cold regions and high mountain ranges. Water penetrates cracks that expand as it freezes into ice. When water freezes, it becomes nine percent 'bigger'. If you were to take a picture of the mountain top now, and another one in fifty years' time, you would probably see the change.

Vegetation changes character too. What happens over a longer period of time is unclear, but some forecasts predict that the tree line will move upwards and the proportion of bare mountain regions will decrease as a result of a changing climate. At the same time, other factors such as grazing, nutritional value and previous land use have an important impact on trees and forest spread.

**Sources:** Arjeplognytt.se 1 July, 2012 interview with geologist Lena Kjällgren and Piteå-Tidningen, Bertil Sundkvist 13 September, 2010.

**Further reading:** www.lansstyrelsen.se/norbotten and the Institute for Subarctic Landscape Research, INSARC: www.recallingthepast.se.

**Lulep Iksjåk is an easy peak for all ages to climb. It takes 45 to 90 minutes to walk up.**



**A glimpse of history:** The area just north of Lulep and Alep Iksjåk was controversial in the late 1970s. LKAB wanted to start mining there, extracting uranium for the nuclear industry. But no mine was opened. After an extensive debate and a referendum in Arjeplog municipality the proposal was mothballed. The exploration stopped 125 metres into the mountain and was later filled with water. The mining area, called Pleutajokk, was covered with soil. LKAB shut the project down when the potential buyer of the uranium, the Swedish nuclear fuel supply, found that Swedish uranium from Pleutajokk would be too expensive. Thirty years later, traces of the exploration are still visible. Sediment ponds remain, covered in grass and birch bush. In the mining area some blocks are visible. There are visible traces of mineral collectors who have knocked chunks off the disputed area in Pleuta. Pipes from drill holes are sticking up in places.



**When the uranium was discovered and investigated people started calling the road to Pleutajokk 'Uranium Road'. These days the name is official.**

## 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-Sädvajaura, Laisdalen Valley, Laisälven River, Långsjön-Gåbrek, Märkberget, Nimtek, Pieljekaise, Pite River, Rakåive, Ramanj, Ståkke-Bårgå, Sulitelma, Tjeggelvas, Tjälmejaure, Udtja, Veddek and the Yraf delta.