

Kungsleden Trek - The Kings Trail of Sweden

Trip Code: SKT

Version: 2024 - SKT Kungsleden Trek - The Kings Trail of Sweden





HIGHLIGHTS

- Guided ascent of Sweden's highest mountain, Kebnekaise (2104m)
- Relax in saunas and experience the delights of the midnight sun in Swedish Lapland
- Spectacular Arctic Circle landscapes and wildlife

One of the wildest and most remote trekking holidays in Europe

AT A GLANCE

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

- 8 Breakfasts
- 7 Lunches
- 7 Dinners
- 7 nights Mountain Hut / Refuge
- 1 nights Hotel

VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE

Introduction

Trek through Swedish Lapland and climb its highest peak on one of Europe's most wild and remote hikes, the 'King's Trail' or 'Kungsleden', on this superb walking holiday. The King's Trail is situated 200 kilometres north of the Arctic Circle deep in Swedish Lapland. In summer, the approach to Kebnekaise (2117m) Sweden's highest mountain, crosses an unspoiled land of flower-carpeted birch forest and spectacular glacial valleys where the indigenous Sami people tend their herds of reindeer. Starting out alongside the Abisko River, we trek to the wonderful viewpoint of the T'tja Pass (1100m) and continue via the impressive waterfalls of the Tj'ktajakka Valley. Carrying light backpacks, we overnight at a series of comfortable mountain huts, some of which have saunas to help soothe the limbs after a day's walking. Upon reaching the Kebnekaise Mountain Station, we have time for a glacier trek and for the ascent to the exposed and snowy summit of Sweden's highest peak. Superb trekking and the unforgettable experience of daylight at midnight makes this a unique adventure holiday.

Note: This holiday will be 1 day longer (10 days long) from 2025 onwards. Please select the correct version of this tour from the drop down box on the Itinerary section of this page.

Is this holiday for you?

The days on the King's Trail (excluding the ascent of Kebnekaise) involve straightforward walking on well-defined paths. However some of the days are reasonably long with the longest being 25 kilometres. Additionally, you will need to carry all of your personal equipment and a minimal supply of the communal food. For this we recommend that you take a comfortable 50-60 litre backpack. We estimate that you should be able to keep the weight of your pack to no more than 10-12 kgs, since you will not be carrying either a sleeping bag or a camping mattress. The modest altitudes attained on this holiday will not have an effect on the strenuousness of the hiking. The longest and most strenuous day of the trekking holiday will be on the ascent of Kebnekaise. Group members will be issued with a climbing harness and a climbing helmet. With the local guide leading, the group will be roped together when crossing the lower glacier and on any snow-slope sections of the route. Because this route is regularly climbed there are usually big foot-steps in the snow to follow. Sections of the route involve easy scrambling, with the assistance and security of fixed ropes, which you will clip in to. The ascent of Kebnekaise is entirely optional.

Itinerary

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DAY 1

Meet at the Abisko Mountain Station. A single timed transfer from Kiruna Airport is provided.

Meet at the Abisko Mountain Station located approximately one hour's drive from Kiruna Airport. A single group transfer from Kiruna Airport is provided. The drive leads through undulating countryside covered in birch and pine forest, with views across to the snow-patched mountains. The town's name comes from the Sami word 'Giron', meaning ptarmigan. Time allowing, this evening there will be a short presentation about Abisko and the King's Trail. Overnight at the Mountain Station

Meals: D



Accommodation

Mountain Hut / Refuge

DAY 2

Trek alongside to Abeskoeatnu River to Abiskojaure Lake.

From Abisko, we follow the impressive Abeskoeatnu River to a lake, Abiskojaure. An easy day on a flat trail with a good path throughout. In marshy areas there are boardwalks to protect the fragile semi-tundra vegetation and keep your feet dry! There are many wild flowers to be seen along the trail, including 6 varieties of orchid. If you are lucky it's also possible to see tracks of bears, wolves, lynx, wolverine! Golden eagles and Fish eagles can often be seen circling high up in the sky. We spend the night in a hut at the far end of Abiskojaure lake. Dinner is prepared on a communal basis, with the assistance of the guide.

Meals: BLD



AccommodationMountain Hut / Refuge



Ascent 100M



Distance 15KM

DAY 3

Trek to Alesjaure.

After making breakfast and sandwiches for lunch, we head off for the day. Following a trail to the west of

the stream, we may pass Sami communities living in the forest. After walking over a low col, we drop spectacularly down into the next valley. From here there are great views of the high peaks. Although today's 20 km walk is quite a long one, it is over easy terrain with no big hills to climb. To save your legs, it is possible to take a boat ride along the lake for the last 6 km to the hut at Alesjaure. This informal ferry service is provided by the local Sami people but is only available from early July (earlier departures will not be able to take advantage of this little boat). There is a cluster of huts at Alesjaure, and an excellent sauna in a separate hut next to the stream where you can get hot then jump into the crystal-clear meltwater stream (not for the feint-hearted). Hot water can be drawn off the sauna wood-burning stove for a DIY shower. Note that saunas are mixed male and female timed sessions.

Meals: **BLD**



AccommodationMountain Hut / Refuge



Ascent 300M



Distance 20KM

DAY 4

Trek over the Tjäktja Pass (1140m) to Sälka.

After breakfast we pack up and head off on today's walk, which will be one of our longest. We follow a long valley that rises gradually for 13 kilometres before a short steep section up to the Tjäktja Pass (1140m). Clear weather permitting, there are fantastic views of the next valley from the top. We now drop steeply into the Tjäktjajakka Valley, reminiscent of Glencoe but with more sisters! There are some spectacular waterfalls tumbling down the eastern side of the valley. Our overnight halt, the Sälka Hut is in a great location for exploration of other valleys and peaks, if you have the inclination - there will certainly be sufficient daylight. The water in this entire area is safe and good to drink, direct from the stream. The locals just have a plastic cup hanging off their belts that they remove and dip into a stream whenever required. Dinner is once again prepared communally. Again there will be access to a sauna for those keen to relax those tired legs.

Meals: BLD



AccommodationMountain Hut / Refuge



Ascent 350M



Descent 300M



Distance 25KM

DAY 5

Follow the Tjäktjajakka Valley to the Singi Hut.

To make sure our legs are in good condition for the optional ascent of Kebnakaise, we now enjoy two consecutive shorter day walks and today we continue to follow the Tjäktjajakka Valley to Singi Hut. We should be lucky enough to spot groups of reindeer in this area. Uncomfortable in the heat of summer, these animals tend to sit on the snow patches, which does make them very visible! We overnight in the hut at Singi.

Meals: **BLD**



Accommodation
Mountain Hut / Refuge



Descent 100M



Distance 12KM

DAY 6

Leave the Kungsleden Trail and trek east to Kebnekaise Mountain Station in the Laddjuvaggi Valley.

Today we leave the Kungsleden trail to head east to the Kebnekaise Mountain Station. The 33km trail from Singi out to Nikkaluokta is not part of the Kungsleden itself, but this route does allow an easy exit from the area and also affords us the opportunity to ascend Sweden's highest mountain, Kebnekaise. The Kebnekaise Mountain Station in the Laddjuvaggi Valley is like a small mountain village, accommodating and feeding those who visit to make the ascent of Kebnekaise. There are excellent facilities here, with showers, saunas, post-sauna chill out rooms (kept at an ambient 25°C), comfy chairs, a restaurant, bar and shop selling souvenirs, trail food and some clothing and equipment. No more communal cooking is necessary, as all food is provided in the restaurant. After dinner, there is a briefing about the ascent of Kebnekaise presented by the mountain guides.

Meals: **BLD**



AccommodationMountain Hut / Refuge



Ascent 150M



Descent 150M



Distance 14KM

DAY 7

Ascent of Kebnekaise (2104m) via the East Route.

An early start to the day for those wanting to make the ascent of Kebnekaise. We meet our guide for the climb at the equipment store where everyone will be allocated harnesses and helmets. (Note that all technical equipment is provided at no additional cost). Then we head off alongside the Kittelbäcken stream in the Kitteldalen Valley towards the Björlings Glacier. The trail is the steepest ground encountered on the holiday so far. The glacier, which is crevassed, leads to a narrow snow ridge with some exposure. Our guide will ensure that everyone clips into the fixed lines at this point to secure the scramble onto a rocky terrace. After a further 50m, we reach a wide gulley. From here, the fixed lines continue up a steep and exposed scramble for about 100m. After crossing some easy rocky slopes, there's a final steep snow and ice section to the summit. Kebnekaise was first climbed by a Frenchman, Charles Robot, in 1883 and the summit is a glacier that is slowly melting. Depending on your map, Kebnekaise is reported as being either 2104, 2108, or 2111 metres. There are excellent views along the sinuous snow ridge to the rocky north summit and to all the peaks that mark the border with Norway. Descent is via the same route as we head back to the comforts of the Kebnekaise Mountain Station.

Meals: **B L D**



AccommodationMountain Hut / Refuge



Ascent 1400M



Descent 1400M



Time 9 - 10 hours walking



Distance 15KM



Trek out to Nikkaloukta. Bus to Kiruna.

Another early start. Easy walking for a couple of hours to the lake, Ladtjojaure. From here, we take a boat ride down the river and across the lake. Looking back across the turquoise lake water to the dramatic peaks and valleys of Kebnekaise makes a fitting finale to the trip. We walk out throught the forest to Nikkaluaokta. On arrival in Nikkaloukta we say goodbye to our guide and catch the bus to Kiruna where we check in to our comfortable hotel.

Meals: B L



Accommodation



Descent 200M



Distance 14KM

DAY 9

Departure day. A single time transfer to Kiruna Airport is provided.

The holiday ends after breakfast at the hotel in Kiruna. A group transfer to Kiruna Airport is provided.

Meals: B

Holiday Information

What's Included

- A professional amd qualified tour leader
- STF Guided ascent of Kebnekaise
- Single timed airport transfers on arrival and departure
- All accommodation as described
- Meals as described in the Meal Plan
- All land transport required by the itinerary
- Boat trips on Lake Alesjaure (July/Aug departures only) and Lake Ladtjojaure

What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Tips
- Airport transfers other than group transfers
- Some meals as described in the Meal Plan
- Miscellaneous expenses drinks and souvenirs etc

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The group will meet at the Abisko Mountain Station. On Day 1 of the itinerary there will be a single timed transfer from Kiruna airport to Abisko Mountain Station. This transfer will be timed to meet the SAS flight from Stockholm arriving in the early afternoon. The journey takes 1.5 hours.

On the last day of the Land Only itinerary there will be another single timed transfer from Kiruna to Kiruna Airport timed to meet the check in of the SAS flight to Stockholm departing in the late morning.

Anyone may join the group transfers by prior arrangement. Travelling as a group or on public transport saves energy. If your flight schedule does not allow you to take advantage of the arrival transfer you should make your own way to the Abisko Mountain Station. There is a reliable airport bus service which will meet every flight.

Accommodation contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

Meal Plan

All meals except 1 dinner are included in the holiday price.

Food & Water

It is not recommended to drink untreated water from the taps. If you are on a trekking or cycling holiday, water is supplied to fill up your individual bottles. This will be boiled, filtered or provided in large jerry cans or 5 litre bottles. Additionally you should take purification tablets or a filter bottle (such as a Water-To-Go bottle) to treat your water when in towns or where water is not supplied. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

Whilst staying at the mountain huts, everyone will be expected to assist with preparing meals. The Tour Leader will organise a rota for these communal duties. The huts have basic cooking facilities. Breakfast will consist of bread, porridge or muesli with dehydrated milk, coffee, tea, hot chocolate and some jam. Lunch will be bread, sandwiches and soup, made up from hot water from a thermos. Dinner will be coordinated by the Tour Leader and will also be mainly dehydrated and processed food. The fresh food that we carry from Abisko is estimated to last to Alesjaure cabin. The rest of the food for this hike will be cached in the Alesjaure cabin and in the Slka cabin. There is no shop in the Tjktja cabin so the group will carry food from Alesjaure to Tjktja. Whilst staying at the mountain stations, all meals will be taken in the restaurants.

Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide special diets. Due to the nature of some of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your diet with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.

Accommodation

We will spend 3 nights in "Mountain Stations", at Kebnekaise and Abisko, which are more like lodges and have great facilities. Here the group will sleep in 6 berth rooms, with shared toilet and shower facilities and communal seating areas. All bedding is provided. Each station has a separate male and female saunas, a good restaurant and a bar.

During our time on the trail we will stay each night in a different mountain hut. These are maintained by the Swedish Tourist Association (STF) and each has its own host in residence. The huts are simple, but comfortable, and each has its own unique personality! There is no electricity, running water or mobile phone coverage, this is all part of the special and unique experience of staying in the remote Swedish wilderness.

The biggest hut has spaces for around 90 people, split over several smaller individual cabins, others are much smaller. Our group will usually have exclusive use of one of the lodges, though at busy time we may be required to share. Inside each of the huts you will find a combined kitchen and cosy day room, bedroom and drying room.

We will sleep in mixed dorms of 4-10 people. Pillows and blankets are provided and all rooms have a wood-burning stove or gas heater. For comfort we recommend taking your own pillow case and a sleeping bag liner.

Each hut has a shared outside toilet block. These are well maintained and have plenty of toilet paper and antibacterial hand wash available.

Most of the mountain huts also have their own wood-fired sauna. The saunas will have split session times in the evening: female only, male only and mixed. Towels are not provided at the huts so we recommend taking a travel towel that is large enough to wrap around you. Each of the saunas will have and a small basic washroom attached to it, where bowls and hot water (from the sauna) are provided for you to wash. It is possible to wash your hair here if there is enough water.

One of the most fun aspects of this holiday is getting involved in the hut chores. Chores include fetching water, cooking dinner, preparing breakfast and packed lunch items, and clearing up. The tour leader will coordinate. It is expected that you leave the hut in the condition you found it with fresh water and wood for the next weary travellers.

Single rooms are not available..

Group Leader & Support Staff

The group will be led by a professional and qualified tour leader.

Altitude

The altitudes on this holiday are not extreme and the maximum altitude attained is no more than the equivalent of a pressurised cabin on an international flight. You may 'feel' the altitude the first time you trek above 2000 metres but all that is required is a slower pace to compensate. You should pay particular attention to your hydration levels while trekking above 2000 metres.

Spending Money

Approximately £100 (or equivalent in US dollars, Euros etc.) should be allowed for miscellaneous expenses, drinks and souvenir purchases. This amount will allow you to pay for the final dinner in Kiruna and also to pay a tip to your local guide. Additional baggage which you do not need for the trek is transported from Abisko to Nikkaloukta where it is stored until your arrival. There is a 40 SEK (£4/\$6) additional cost for this bag storage which is paid directly to the Sami people living in Nikkaloukta, and this service is a vital part of their earnings. We recommend that you carry your travel money in the form of currency (Swedish Krona) since there will be not be any opportunities to change it once you leave Kiruna. There is no ATM in Kiruna airport, but you can withdraw cash at ATM's at Stockholm/Arlanda airport when you change flights. If you are intending to buy considerable quantities of soft drinks or beer, or expensive souvenirs you should budget accordingly.

Guidance on Tipping

Tips are the accepted way of saying 'thank you' to your local guides. They do not form part of their wages. KE always pays local crews the best rates of pay, no matter what country they are in and any tips they receive are seen as a personal thank you from group members. For our part, we advise local teams that tips are not a duty or a prerequisite but are a bonus and entirely dependent on the service that was given. For your guides we recommend that you give a tip if you feel that their services have met your satisfaction.

Baggage Allowance

You should try to keep the weight of your equipment to a minimum. A reasonable overall weight for your packed rucksack during the trekking is 10 kgs / 22lbs. You need to allow space in your backpack for an extra 1-2kgs (2 - 4lbs) of fresh food you will be carrying from Abisko. After the first night in Abiskojaure the extra weight is reduced to approx 1 kg. The fresh food from Abisko is estimated to last to Alesjaure cabin. The rest of the food for this hike will be cached in the Alesjaure cabin and in the Sälka cabin. There is no shop in the Tjäktja cabin so the group will carry food from Alesjaure to Tjäktja. The weight of the food is estimated to approx 0,5-1 kg/person (1-2lbs). Luggage not required for the hike (your main luggage and travel clothes) will be transported from the Abisko mountain station to Nikkaloukta where is it stored until your arrival. There is an additional charge for luggage to be stored here whilst you are on your trek (see spending money).

Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status and so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

General Information

Passport & Visas

Europe

Your passport must meet 2 requirements. It must be:

- less than 10 years old on the day you enter (check the 'date of issue')
- valid for at least 3 months after the day you plan to leave (check the 'expiry date')

For the latest details on visiting countries within the EU or the European Economic Area (EEA), please check the UK Government website

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders. A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday. Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel. For the most up to date information on entry requirements, please visit the <u>UK Government website</u>.

Health & Vaccinations

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips. You will need to carry your own treatment for the allergy with you, as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' are not carried as standard by KE leaders and staff. You should inform your leader on arrival of your allergy, and let them know where you keep your adrenaline pen.

Vaccinations

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you require any specific vaccinations.

GHIC / Medical cover

UK residents should carry a free Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC). This entitles you to state provided medical treatment when you're visiting an EU country or Switzerland. This is not a substitute for medical travel insurance which is vital when travelling overseas.

Climate

The summer months from June to early September offer the only timeframe to trek the Kungsleden. Daytime temperatures in Kiruna in July and August range from 8°C / 46°F to 18°C / 64°F. Sunny weather can be expected, with occasional rainfall, although it is more likely to be wet in August. It can also be cold at night and in more exposed areas. There can also be some snow patches remaining on the trail, and muddy, boggy sections of trail, so boots need to be suitably waterproofs. The midnight sun shines from late May to mid-July, and it is daylight 24 hours a day from mid-May to the end of July. The summer sun is never far below the horizon.

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's 'Travel Aware' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that prior to travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: www.travel.state.gov for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates direct from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

Books

- The Rough Guide to Sweden. James Proctor and Neil Roland.
- Sweden Lonely Planet Guide. Carolyn Bain and Graeme Cornwallis.
- Kungsleden: The Royal Trail Through Arctic Sweden Claes Grundsten

Maps

Fjallkarta. Abisko - Kabnekaise - Narvik. Lantmteriet (Sweden Survey) 1:100,000

A detailed topographic map in colour, at a smaller scale than most UK hikers' maps but with a useful 25m. contour interval. The map is in Swedish with an English legend.

Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our <u>Travel Insurance</u> page for further information and to get a quote.

Equipment Information

Equipment List

Please try to keep the weight of your baggage to a minimum. See the 'baggage allowance' section for further details.

You SHOULD bring the following items:

- Hiking boots (approach shoes will not be suitable for the ascent of Kebnekaise)
- Gaiters
- Socks
- Trainers or slippers for use in the huts.
- Walking socks (2 or 3 pairs)
- Spare laces
- Trekking trousers
- Lightweight waterproof overtrousers
- Underwear
- Shorts

■ Thermal baselayer shirts
■ T-shirt / casual shirt
■ Fleece jacket or warm jumper
■ Lightweight waterproof jacket
■ Sunhat
■ Warm hat
■ Sunglasses
■ Sun protection (including total bloc for lips, nose etc.)
■ Thermal gloves
■ Backpack 50 - 60 litres
■ Mug and spoon (for lunches)
 Antibacterial hand wash
■ Vacuum flask ½ litre
■ Water bottles 1 Litre (x2) (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
Water purification tablets
■ Insect repellant

Basic First Aid Kit which should include: Antiseptic cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment

The following items are optional:

- Foam sit mat (for lunch stops)
- Washbag and toiletries
- Small towel
- Sleeping bag liner
- Travel clothes (can be left in main luggage)
- Cameras
- Selection of dry bags (to keep kit dry)
- Trekking poles
- Pen-knife (remember to put all sharp objects in hold baggage
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

Notes:

Your main luggage and travel clothes will be transported from the Abisko Mountain Station to Nikkaluokta where they will be stored, and then transported on to the hotel in Kiruna. There is a small charge of approx 40 SEK for this baggage storage which you will need to pay directly to the local Sami people living in Nikkaluokta.

You need to allow space in your backpack for an extra 1-2kgs of fresh food you will be carrying from Abisko. After the first night in Abiskojaure the extra weight is reduced to approx 1 kg. The fresh food from Abisko is estimated to last to Alesjaure cabin. The rest of the food for this hike will be cached in the Alesjaure cabin and in the Salka cabin. There is no shop in the Tjaktja cabin so the group will carry food from Alesjaure to Tjaktja. The weight of the food is estimated to approx 0.5-1 kg/person.

Although the summer months from June - early September offer the best conditions to trek the Kings Trail with day time temperatures of between 8 - 18C (46 - 64F), it can be cold during this period and warm clothing should be packed. There can also be some snow patches remaining on the trail, and muddy, boggy sections of trail, so boots need to be suitably waterproof.

Cotswold Outdoor



Many of the Equipment items listed above are available from <u>Cotswold Outdoor</u> - our *'Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer'*. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive 12.5% discount voucher from Cotswold Outdoor and other retailers. >> Find out more

Land Only Information

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for joining at the Abisko Mountain Station and ending in Kiruna. Single timed transfers are included from/to Kiruna Airport are provided.

Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London to Kiruna with SAS via Stockholm. Outbound flights will depart the UK in the morning arriving later the same day. Return flights will depart Kiruna airport in the morning of the last day of the itinerary, arriving in the UK later the same evening.

Why Choose KE

Why KE

This trip was recently featured in The Telegraph's article: Great escapes in Europe's last empty places. KE is one of the few tour operators in the UK, and the world, who offer the King's Trail as a fully guided and inclusive package.

Please Note This document was downloaded on 20/05/2024 and the trip is subject to change