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Arctic Grand Prix: When reindeer race

Lead

It's not only the bipeds from Finland that have the racing gene: the reindeer derby in Ivalo, northern Finland, shows that the fastest quadropeds are more than a match for huskies and snowmobiles...

Reindeer are far too much fun to be relegated simply to dragging Santa Claus round the skies. They might not seem that exciting when pulling a loaded sled, but they come into their own at the popular reindeer races in the far north of Finland. At the peak of the season, at the annual Reindeer Cup Championship Drives in Inari, daredevil pilots come from across the entire Arctic region in order to pit the best animals against each other.



This competition is not for the faint of heart, as the reindeer pull their jockeys behind them on skis. On the ice, they get up to speeds of round 60km/h round the horseshoe-shaped race track and, once one of these beautiful animals accelerates, it is quite hard to stop it. Anyone fighting for victory and glory in the reindeer rally requires not only strong biceps, but a healthy dose of madness.

Most races are held around Easter time. Of course, springtime in the reindeer metropolis of Ivalo is not quite as lovely as in Paris and to enjoy this exciting event as a spectator, you need not only long underwear, but ideally fur as well.

You know what they say: there's no such thing as bad weather, only inappropriate clothing. At temperatures below zero being fairly constant in the Arctic Circle, this is arguable. The only ones who don't freeze are the reindeer.

Photos: Kuvapic Kimmo Brandt Oy

Video: Youtube

Gallery

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