

Senja Island Winter Climbing

<https://www.alpine-guides.com/trips/senja-island-winter-climbing/>

A Senja Island winter climbing week is one of those trips that you never forget. The island is a world class ice and mixed climbing venue, covered in great climbs and potential new objectives across the grade range. Senja lies at 69 degrees north – some 300km north of the arctic circle on the north west coast of Norway. It's a very remote spot with amazing mountain and fjord scenery and the winter climbing potential on this spectacular island is endless. The climbing is best described as being 'like scotland on steroids'- with everything from european style roadside icefalls, to Cuillin like ridge traverses, to huge 500m high ice and mixed faces. This is a week for experienced winter climbers, who want to climb high standard ice and mixed routes, including the possibility of making first ascents.

Une semaine d'escalade hivernale sur l'île de Senja est l'un de ces voyages que vous n'oublierez jamais. L'île est un site d'escalade mixte de glace et de glace de classe mondiale, recouvert de belles ascensions et de nouveaux objectifs potentiels à travers la gamme de niveaux. Senja se trouve à 69 degrés nord - environ 300 km au nord du cercle arctique sur la côte nord-ouest de la Norvège. C'est un endroit très isolé avec des paysages de montagne et de fjord incroyables et le potentiel d'escalade hivernale sur cette île spectaculaire est infini. La meilleure façon de décrire l'escalade est de décrire «l'Écosse sous stéroïdes», avec des glaces de type européen en bordure de route, jusqu'à des traversées de crêtes de Cuillin, jusqu'à d'énormes glaces atteignant 500 m de hauteur et des faces mixtes. C'est une semaine pour les alpinistes expérimentés qui souhaitent grimper sur de la glace de haute qualité et sur des routes mixtes, y compris la possibilité de faire de premières ascensions.

North Norway Ice

Friday, 16 March 2012

Senja

The island of Senja has a very different feel to it that the more 'pure ice' areas around Lyngen. The coast brings more fickle weather and the climbing generally has a more 'Scottish' feel to it. Though there is surely plenty of ice around, Senja excels in mixed climbing on trad gear, where there are probably near endless opportunities to put up new routes. To say it's 'Scottish' may prompt the question 'so why go all that way?', well more reliable conditions, epic lines and no other climbers is why.

L'île de Senja a une impression très différente de celle des zones de «glace pure» autour de Lyngen. La côte offre plus de temps capricieux et l'escalade donne généralement une impression plus «écossaise». Bien qu'il y ait sûrement beaucoup de glace autour, Senja excelle dans l'escalade mixte avec des équipements traditionnels, où il existe probablement une infinité d'occasions infinies de dessiner de nouvelles routes. Dire que c'est «écossais» peut amener à se poser la question « Alors pourquoi aller si loin ? », Des conditions bien plus fiables, des lignes épiques et aucun autre alpiniste, voilà pourquoi.

The guru of climbing on Senja is Bent Vidar Eilertsen - a Mountain Guide and owner of Senja Lodge. We won't go into a load of detail on the climbing here – if you want info check his site: <http://senjalodge.com/> (and indeed stay at the lodge, where he will probably be on hand to offer advice). There is already a pdf on the site showing climbs and he is working on an expanded version with maps, and after that an actual guidebook.

Le gourou de l'escalade sur Senja est Bent Vidar Eilertsen, guide de montagne et propriétaire de Senja Lodge. Nous n'entrerons pas dans les détails de l'escalade ici - si vous voulez des informations, visitez son site: <http://senjalodge.com/> (et restez au lodge, où il sera probablement sur place pour donner des conseils) . Il y a déjà un pdf sur le site montrant les montées et il travaille sur une version élargie avec des cartes, puis sur un véritable guide.

2013 UPDATE: Ines Papert visited Senja early in 2013, climbing amongst other things a mega new route with Bent that can be read about [here](#).

Here is some brief info on what is around, from just an ice climbing point of view (note, I doubt we really scratched the surface after being plagued with bad weather).



Here are some pics of the routes indicated above :

Tunnel Cuddling



Tunnel Cuddling

Not an Earth shatteringly brilliant route, but not bad at all, and about 3m off the road.



Opposite Tunnel Cuddling, maybe 20mins from the road, and prob a full pitch (at a guess)

Ersfjord

A route ending in a pillar on the left (noted as 'WI4' on map), and a route in a cleft with a chock-stone on the right (WI3).



The aforementioned pillar at Ersfjord

Coming from Senjahopen, as you come out of the tunnel into Ersfjord, there are three routes. The left hand thin ice line is a hard mixed line put up by Rich Cross this year, then the high icefall on the right and the lower pillar further to the right.



Immediately outside the tunnel at Ersfjord

Finnkona

These, when we tried, had a deceptively long and awkward approach along the edge of the fjord. I am sure it very much depends on snow conditions though. The WI6 is reputed to be a truly amazing route.



The WI6 is the left hand of the three lines high on the face, to get to it ascend the ice lower and to the right leading to the snowfield



Here it is close up, approach out of sight on the left



More awkward approach through the mixed ground on the left



To the left of those is this long WI4+ (ie so before you get to the WI6 on the approach)

Heston

Visible just before, and from, the switchbacks on the main road through Ersfjord.



Another long WI4



Bent's place is in Meffjordvaer, at the top of the map

Here are some pics of the routes indicated above: