

THE ULTIMATE SNOW ADVENTURE IN FINLAND

Hey welcome to watchmojo.com, I'm your host Leila. If winter activities are your thing like riding into an ice-breaker or staying in a snow castle, then you'd want to experience this one time in a life time adventure in Kemi, Finland.

The city's claim to fame is its magnificent castle and mammoth snow hotel in Kemi, the biggest in the world. It is rebuilt every winter with a different architecture. In 1996 this first snow castle endured no fewer than 300,000 visitors. The area covered by the castle has varied from almost 140,000 to over 215,000 square feet. Despite these varying configurations the snow castle has a few recurring elements: a chapel a restaurant and a hotel. The spiritual castle offers 50 double rooms, two group rooms for eight people and a honeymoon suite. Guest rooms are creatively and whimsically decorated by local artists using local materials.

Another unique tourist draw of Kemi is the world's only unique tourist ice-breaker, the Sampo. Built in 1961 to pass through ice-covered water. The Sampo uses its great momentum and power to drive its bow up onto the ice under the immense weight of the ship. For a ship to be considered an ice-breaker it requires three components: a strengthened hull, an ice-clearing shape and the power to push through. None of which are possessed by most normal ships. The Sampo served more than 30 years as an ice-breaker before retiring and offering day-excursions to tourists in the gulf of Botnia from the port of Kemi. The Sampo now sails from the middle of December to April, although ice in the region can melt as late as June. The day excursion lasts four hours. On the open sea the ship can achieve a maximum speed of 16 knots. The 3,540 ton vessel sails surprisingly evenly. Ice of less than 3 feet thick is crushed almost imperceptibly. On reaching the packed ice the speed is increased and even ice over 25 feet thick surrenders with a crash. In the middle of the largest ice-field in Europe, the bolder tourists can try ice swimming in the black water dressed in a water-tight thermal suit. Of course, he will be wearing a warm survival suit. After this unique experience the ship's captain presents all with a certificate. Tourists may visit the engine room; stand on the bridge and finish off on deck admiring the arctic seascape. Depending on the tourist's choice the journey after the cruise may continue by dog-team, snowmobile or helicopter. On an ice safari you have the choice of visiting either a Lap tepee or a forest cab

THE BEACHES OF THAILAND

With thousands of miles of coastline it's no wonder this country is popular with water lovers. Hi I'm Rebecca Bracken and welcome to Watchmojo.com and today we'll be taking a look at some water activities in Thailand. The beaches in Thailand are the most popular tourist draw and not without reason. Thailand boasts beautiful turquoise waters lined by idyllic beaches. Because of Thailand's crystal-clear and warm waters, as well as a vast variety of underwater life, this country is easily considered one of the top scuba destinations in the world. Coral gardens, reefs and rock formations make this underwater world fascinating. Most of Thailand's wild rivers are located in the north and it is therefore this region in which the best white water rafting is found. It is only recently that wild water rafting has gained popularity. The rainy season, between mid-May to mid-October is the best time to experience this thrill. Whether you're interested in an existing raft trip or to see underwater treasures, Thailand is the place for water lovers.

BEST ROMANTIC GETAWAY

The Official Best Romantic Getaway of Massachusetts for 2008 is Emerson Inn by the Sea, located in Rockport, just 36 miles north of Boston. Romance, rich distinguishing history, seaside views and palate-pleasing cuisine are some of the things each visitor enjoys when staying at this year round seaside inn. Its history dates back to the 1840s, and it is here where world-famous poet Ralph Waldo Emerson found inspiration to some of his most famous writings. Emerson's descendants still come to the inn for inspirational stays as well as visitors from all around the world. For the past decade Proust and Meshoko have been honoured operators of the inn. Their expertise and their hospitality in history have been instrumental to the modern-day success of the inn and its award-winning restaurant, the Grand Café, 'unparalleled on viandes', writes the Boston Globe, editor's pick by the Yankee Travel Guide and the award of excellence for 2007 and 2008 by the Wine Spectator are but some of its accolades. With more here is General Manager Olive Williamson.

Olive: 'We are here year round for you to come and enjoy a romantic stay. On our sweeping veranda you will find rocking chairs for your afternoon delight. Our heated swimming-pool will seasonally invite you for a day of relaxation. In the evening our Grand Café offers creative cuisine. Ralph Waldo Emerson was brought here by David Henry Thoreau years ago. Here he found many ways to write romantic poetry.'

Get away and come experience for yourself what drew Emerson and so many others to this enchanting inn by the sea.