

## SWEDEN

### ARCTIC BATH, LAPLAND

*Game of Thrones* hideaway? Warrior den from a Norse saga? Pick-up sticks? The idea for this frosty-doughnut design stretches back a decade, but the hotel's opening in January felt like something of an event in a place where time is usually measured in millennia. Created by Bertil Harström, one of the architects behind the quirky Treehotel, and designer Johan Kauppi, Arctic Bath is south of the Arctic Circle. It comprises six jaunty wooden cabins with pared-back interiors of pale pine and Baltic limestone near the edge of the River Lule and a half dozen larger ones on the tree-lined shore. In the restaurant, smoked wood grouse, cured trout and slow-cooked reindeer are served by Maarten De Wilde and Kristoffer Åström, the latter known as 'the Sámi chef' for taking indigenous flavours to kitchens across Sweden. But the real reason to make the pilgrimage is for total immersion in the landscape, whether that's an immune-boosting plunge in the open-air cold tub, forest-bathing in the summer or ice-skating on the frozen river. The stillness and light feel meditative – during the few hours of daylight in winter the sky is pink and purple, the only sound the crunching snow. The grass-covered roofs shift colour through the seasons, attracting bees and birds. This is like nowhere else on earth. **FLASH POINT** Visit between October and March for a chance to see the aurora borealis in all its neon glory. And to really get to grips with the wilderness, head out with nature photographer Håkan Hjort. [arcticbath.se](http://arcticbath.se). Doubles from about £400

