

17. Rest area. Keep to the right. After 100 meters you will reach a rest area with fire place, wood for the fire and an outlook tower. Take care when you climb it and handle the fire with care (see point 15). After the brake, return on the same trail, when you arrived, to continue your walk along the main trail.

18. Mine. The beginning of 1840's witnessed somewhat of an ore rush in this region. There were mining claims for gold, platinum, silver, copper and iron. The first claim was on Hemberget in December 1840. The claimholder thought he had discovered silver ore, and mining began. However, little or nothing was found, and the project was discontinued. Today, the pit is a reminder of 170 year old optimism and entrepreneurship.

19. Snow scooter cabin. During about three months a year, the snow cover is stable enough for a snow scooter to manoeuvre on the snow surface. Snow scooter traffic is directed to specific routes, which have been prepared to ensure a more pleasurable scooter ride. We are now at the crossing of one of these routes. The local scooter association owns and uses this cabin for its excursions. From the balcony of the cabin you will have an imposing view of the surrounding landscape. When the weather is clear a number of wind mills can be seen in a distance. These are parts of the largest wind mill park of Sweden.

20. Pebble. Here is another piece of evidence from a time when what would become Ersnäs was still the sea bed. The sea heaved and raged. The stones that were part of this embankment rubbed against each other, and all their edges disappeared. When the land rose, these former shores were now far up on land.

21. Ancient sites. The birth of the universe (Big Bang) occurred 14 billion years ago. Our solar system came into being 4 billion years ago. The first organisms developed in water 600 million years ago. At that time the period started, when our fossil fuels were formed, a period which would last for 500 million years. This is the stock of energy which we are consuming during some hundred of years. Our species, Homo Sapiens, made its first appearance in Africa, 200 000 years ago. Our forefathers reached Europe 40 000 years ago, and first began to appear in this northern area about 6 000 years ago. A little distance into this young forest,



Lingonberries

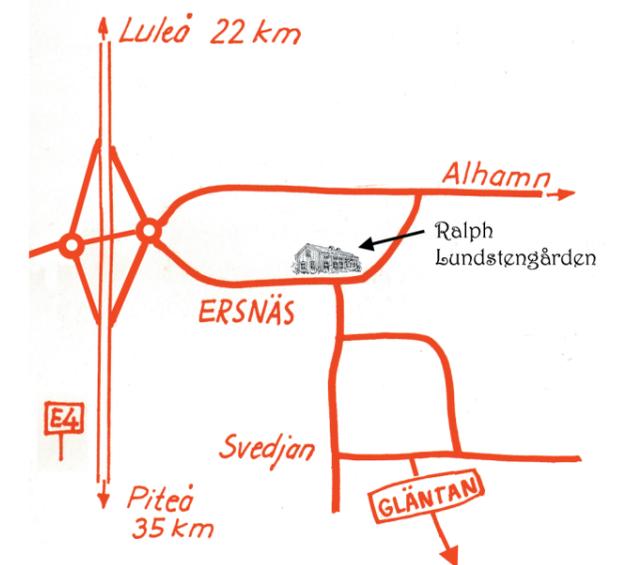
archaeologists discovered what they considered to be the site of a Stone Age settlement, with some quartz flakes and worked fire-cracked stones. At the time (an estimated 3 000 years ago), this area was an island. Because of this, fishermen may have used this site either as a permanent settlement or something more temporary. There is some uncertainty about this conclusion, since the discoveries could have other explanations.

22. Forest berries. Both blueberries and lingonberries grow in these forests. In the past, it was common for families to earn a little extra by picking berries. However, the "hourly income" has in relative terms declined as years passed, and the motivation for this kind of work got weaker. As a result, berry pickers are now imported. In this area, you can find berry pickers from far away countries, such as Thailand. It is estimated that we utilize only ten percent of the amount of berries our forests produce.

For more information and for comments regarding the trail, please contact representatives of the Ersnäs Village Association:

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Here on Ersnäs website there is more information about the Hembergsleden.



Start
Hembergsleden 
Parking at
Gläntan



Ralph Lundstengården

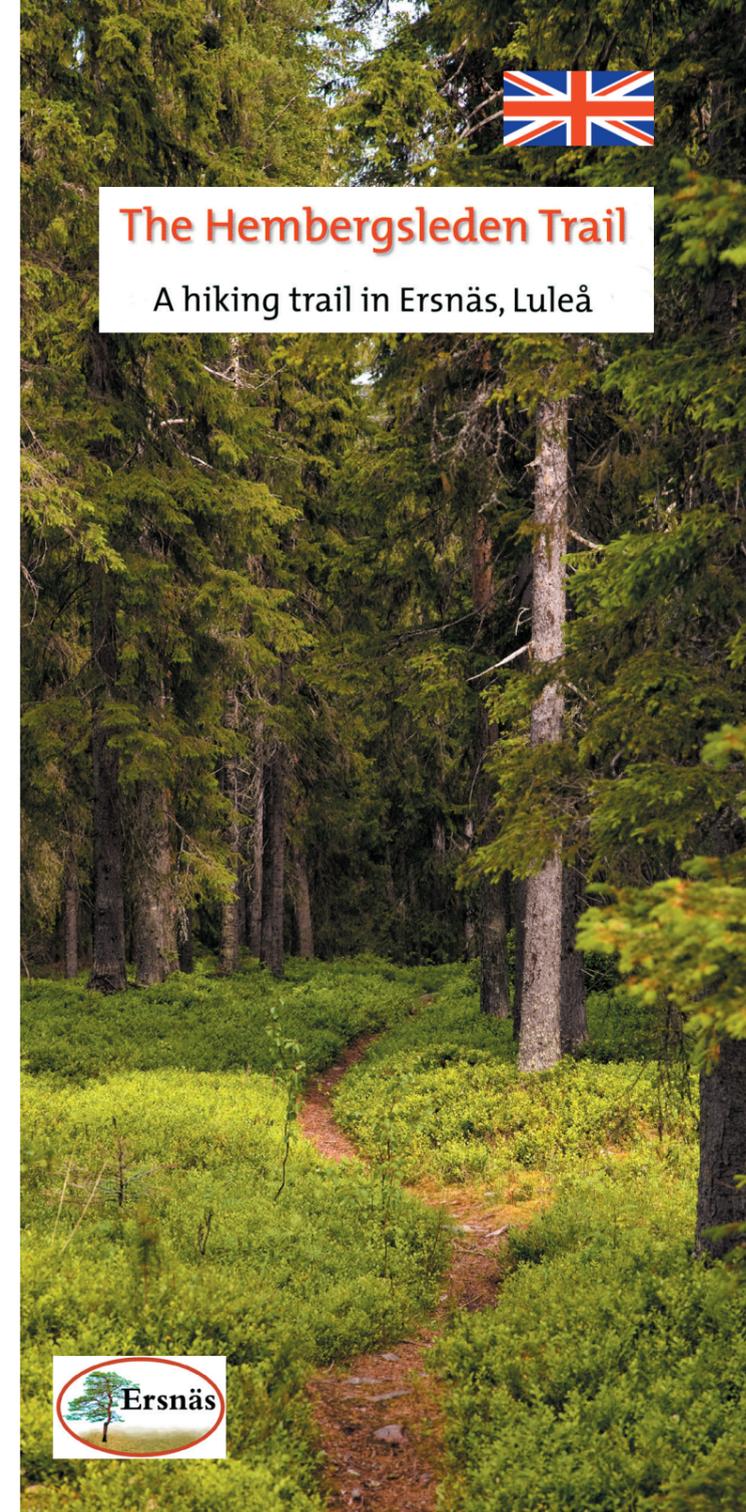
After finishing the walk, make a visit to Ralph Lundstengården, a restaurant listed in The White Guide and situated in the village. It has variable open hours, depending on season.

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The Hembergsleden Trail

A hiking trail in Ersnäs, Luleå





How to reach the trail

Ersnäs with 600 inhabitants, is one of some 30 villages in the municipality of Luleå. The Ersnäs village is situated 20 kilometres south of the center of Luleå. The last page of this brochure shows an outline how to reach Gläntan (the Glade) where the hiking trail, Hembergsleden, starts. The distance, after leaving the highway E 4, to Gläntan is 2,5 km. And there you can park your car.

The trail starts at Gläntan and is marked by red arrows and signs. You walk clockwise. The full length of the trail is 6 km. At first the trail follows a track, used as an illuminated ski track in wintertime.

After roughly 1,5 km you can turn right, choosing the 3 km alternative which is, at the beginning, rather steep when ascending Hemberget. Also in this alternative, you will reach the rest area with a fire place. From there, follow the signs to reach the main trail again.

Further on, following the main trail, you can also choose the 4 km alternative.

Along the trail, there are 22 information points. In this brochure, each of these points are presented, describing things of interest.

A dry toilet at Gläntan is maintained for the convenience of visitors.

The Ersnäs Village Association, responsible for the trail, wish you a nice walk and a nice experience.



Soldier's cottage on the square, village center

1. A soldier's cottage. Until the end of the 19th century, the peasants were required to maintain soldiers to defend Sweden. Four or five homesteads would form a district, which would be responsible to furnishing a soldier with a little farm for himself and his family. In Ersnäs, these farms were located on the less fertile sandy soil, south of the village. These soldier's cottages eventually formed the core of Ersnäs neighbourhood now known as "Svedjan". Thanks to hard work, small patches of arable land were cleared. The stones that were removed were used for walls like this one, along the edge of the fields. Some of the soldier surnames, that those who lived here bore, were Mård (Marten), Högmodig (Arrogant), Beställsam (Fussy), Sik (Whitefish) and Rolig (Funny). These cottages are now torn down with one exception. That restored cottage is rebuilt on Torget (the village square) in the center of the village.

2. An illuminated ski track. Thanks to a few true enthusiasts, Ersnäs got an illuminated ski track in the mid 1970's. During the next ten years, the village became well-known in cross-country skiing circles. Once a year, an international night ski race was held, attracting big names including Bill Kock from the United States who, incidentally, was the first to use skating in cross-country skiing.

3. Forest. We are now hiking through a tiny part of the gigantic coniferous region that stretches halfway around the globe, from the Atlantic coast of Norway to the west, and all the way to the Bering Straits at the easternmost part of Siberia. Sometimes, the Russian word "taiga" is used to describe this type of forest. Spruce, fir and larch trees pre-



View of clearing

dominate. In Norrbotten the fir is the most common tree.

4. A Common. In this area, and about 100 meters beyond, we can note the unevenness of the land. This area is a common, which means it is held jointly by the landowners of Ersnäs. The reason for this unevenness is the high quality sand here, which is perfect to use in house building and road improvement. The peasants would load it onto their horse-drawn wagons and then carry it back to their farms. This continued a good ways into the 20th century.

5. A Path. Nowadays, when we travel, we almost always use some means of transportation. But a hundred years ago, things were very different. Up in the woods, there were well-trodden paths between villages. Settlements in the forest, huts on summer grazing ground, lakes with good fishing and places with bog grass could be hiking destinations. When there was nothing more to eat in the pastures around a farm, cows were sent into the forest to find food. These animals always chose to go in certain directions, and soon a path was made. Most of these trails have now disappeared. Here, however, there are still the clear signs of a well-trodden path that may have led to some now forgotten settlement in the forest. But it could also have been a cow path.

6. A Clearing. Forests are still an important basis for Swedish prosperity, specially in a large area like Norrbotten with most of the surface covered by forests. In the beginning of the 00 decade, on this slope a cutting, including all trees, was performed.



Elk's droppings

In forestry, it's called a "regeneration area." After a cutting, the ground is prepared to facilitate the regrowth either through seed trees which have been left or through planting. Here the regrowth is well on its way. The former bare ground is now only a memory. On this type of land and under these climatic conditions, the trees take almost 100 years before they are ready to be harvested.

7. Forest land draining. Forests in Sweden today yield 50 percent more than in the 1920s. Today the growth attains nationwide 110 million m³ per year, the cutting 85 million per year. Thus growth exceeds withdrawal. This is the result of improved forestry practices, denser forests, fertilizer and draining. For about 100 meters, we will be following a forest ditch dug some time in the 1930's. It was far from an easy task, since only shovels and muscle power were available. To the right (moving clockwise) a large clear cutting from 2016.

8. Land owners. In northern Sweden, the Swedish State and forestry companies, owns most of the forests. But that's not the way in Ersnäs. In this area, the woods are owned by the farmers, and most of the owners live in the village. Here, our trail follows the boundary between the holdings of two owners.

9. Land uplift. During the latest ice age our region was covered by a three km thick ice cap. Ten thousand years ago most of the ice had melted. The weight of the ice had pressed down the earth's crust. Once this pressure diminished, the earth's crust began to rise and re-assume its original shape. This process is still going on and will con-

tinue another ten thousand years. In this area, the land currently rises by almost one centimeter per year. Six thousand years ago a skerry with flat rock began to appear above the surface of the water. This became the top of the mountain, known as Hemberget, which we will be passing later on. The height of Hemberget is one hundred meters above sea level. It took more than a thousand years until the shoreline moved from the point at which we are standing, down to the forest ditch we left a while ago.

10. "The brook bench". Lillkvarnbäcken (the brook of the small mill) is the name of this small stream, the murmuring of which we can listen to at this tranquil place. The source is situated further to the west at the edge of the bog that we are now passing. As the name of the creek indicates, there was a mill some kilometers down the stream, a mill still in use a century ago. If lucky, you might get in sight of an elk, "the king of the forests". If not, at least you will often see the elk's droppings. The elk is a vegetarian. And leaves a mound of what's left of the elk's food. The elk stock is kept constant through regulated hunting. The hunting season in this area always begins on the first Monday in September. In the county of Norrbotten 16 000 elks, including calves, are allowed to be brought down yearly.

11. Reindeer moss. Reindeer moss grows on this flat rock. You will see a great deal of this kind of lichen as the trail passes through the higher reaches of Hemberget. Reindeer moss is the staple food of the reindeer. During certain winters, several hundred reindeer are brought to this coastal area just for this food.

12. Quarry. In our area, you can still see so called stone barns. This term is based on the fact that the lower half of the building consists of stones. These stones were arduously cut out of the bedrock. First, holes of about 10 cm deep were made with the help of a sledge hammer and drill, at intervals of about two decimeters. Once a piece had been formed, these holes were used in cracking the stones with wedges. Skilled smiths were now needed to temper the iron so that the tools would last. Look at these blocks and you can still see the signs of these simple tools. This type of stone production continued a bit into the 20th century.

13. Bog. Large areas of our forests consist of



Picking cloud berries on bog

bogs. Bogs are so soggy that trees don't thrive there. The vegetation consists of various species of grasses. One crucial function in the agriculture of the past was collecting food so that the animals would survive the winter. The area around the village did not yield enough, so farmers used bog grass, which could often be located many kilometres away. Still today certain bogs are in demand. But in these days of quite another reason. On some of them cloudberry (hjortron "the gold of the forest") grow.

14. Dwarf pine. Our trail now passes through an area of naked rock. We are approaching the peak of Hemberget. No felling is allowed here. The predominant tree is the dwarf pine, which grows in nutrient-poor soil, and has a knotty, stunted trunk, and very hard, dense wood. Ersnäs has chosen the dwarf pine as its village symbol.

15. Fire. In the summer of 2008 Hemberget was hit by a forest fire. Somebody had treated fire in a careless way. Fortunately nature has a self-healing ability. Here we have a good example.

16. Lookout point. Follow the arrow "Vidablick" and you will find benches and a table. Behind an area of open farmland, you can see Ersnäs Bay, which is a part of the Gulf of Bothnia. The number of farms has declined sharply in the past 50 years, but there are still enough farmers to keep the land around the village clear. In the distance, you can sometimes see smoke rising in the air. These are clouds of steam from the SSAB coke oven plant. Out there is also the city of Luleå, which you can't see from here.