

UNIQUE OF ITS KIND

An image of an idyll. Small red-painted chalets in a dazzling summer sanctuary. The forest glade is inviting; you want to stay a while to allow your eyes and spirit to experience the peacefulness and wellbeing. Hanhinvittikko summer pasture is today unique of its kind in Norrbotten. The meadowlands and pastures are among the most valuable in the county. There is a variety of species seldom seen in summer pasture, and among the plants found there are a number of threatened species.

Hanhinvittikko is one of the few preserved summer pastures in Tornedalen – the typical buildings remain. At the summer pasture one gains a sense of the history of this border region; traditional Tornedalen construction mixed with the Finnish. When the neighbouring villages on the Finnish side of the Torne River were in flames during the Second World War, many Finns were evacuated to Hanhinvittikko. Large quantities of hay were transported here from southern Sweden and exotic plants arrived here. Maiden Pink *Dianthus deltooides* and Imperforate St John's-wort *Hypericum maculatum* Crantz still grow here at the mountain pasture.

PHOTO: SARA BORGSTRÖM, GUNILLA NILSSON/LST I NORRBOTTEN



THE HERITAGE SITE

Well-preserved environments like Hanhinvittikko summer pasture are most unusual in Norrbotten – therefore it has been declared a heritage site. The aim of the site is to keep the setting intact, so that future generations can experience and learn about the summer pasture traditions of the past. That is why the buildings are maintained and the meadows are being reclaimed; at the end of every summer, there is haymaking at the summer pasture. If the grass is not cut or grazed then the meadow will become overgrown and all the flowers will disappear.

Within the site area, it is important to tread carefully and show consideration – you are welcome to enjoy this idyll!




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☞ The heritage site HANHINVITTIKKO SUMMER PASTURE

100 YEARS AS A SUMMER PASTURE

Hanhinvittikko summer pasture dates back to the 1860s and was in use until summer 1965. The summer pasture included a 35-hectare area of common land, which was owned jointly by the villages of Haapakylä and Matarengi – the latter now called Övertorneå. The buildings at the summer pasture, on the other hand, were owned by different families. On a map from 1875, 11 buildings can be seen – today there are eight left, one of which has been reconstructed. Originally there were four summer pastures at Hanhinvittikko: Antti's, Lantto's, Mörtberg's and Tornéus/Mörtberg's. Today all that remains of Antti's and Lantto's is the foundations, but the other buildings have been preserved and restored.

A WORKING HOLIDAY?

Summer pasture life was popular – it was a sort of working holiday. People travelled here in the summer with both children and livestock, visited other summer pastures, took a sauna and spent time together. Outila summer pasture lay only a few kilometres to the south. Certain families employed milkmaids – one woman worked for 30 consecutive years at the summer pasture! Before the dairy was built in Övertorneå in 1925, all the milk was processed at the summer pasture. The main products were sour milk (similar to yoghurt) and butter – ordinary cheese was not as common in Tornedalen as in the rest of Sweden. However, there was production of white coffee cheese – a Finnish speciality. White coffee cheese is diced and dropped in coffee – still a popular delicacy!



PHOTO: BRITT ISAKSSON/NORRBOTTENS MUSEUM, 1958.



PHOTO: VASTERBOTTENS MUSEUM

PASTURE AHEAD

The departure for the summer pasture took place on Salomon's name day, which was 8 June. When the cows left the cowshed after the long winter, they were often weak; winter fodder was meagre. The significance of the summer pastures was the grazing; when the infields at home were no longer sufficient, the cows were moved to the outfields. In Tornedalen the first summer pastures came into existence in the mid 19th century; in Övertorneå Parish there were in all 18 summer pastures. The cows foraged freely in the forest in the daytime, and came to the buildings for evening milking. Late in the summer, milking would sometimes be postponed until night – the cows could not tear themselves away from the tasty mushrooms!