

MOMENTS

IN THE FINNISH LAKELAND OF SAIMAA



VISITSAIMAA.COM

ONE OF THE LARGEST LAKE DISTRICTS IN THE WORLD WELCOMES YOU TO FINLAND

SAIMAA MOMENTS.

When they are put into a timeline, they form a charming entity that is called

YOUR VACATION.

The moments that are extraordinary and happy are the ones you'll remember. And cherish.

The largest lake district in Finland and one of the country's premier travel destinations, Saimaa welcomes you to share its moments.



4:11 PM

JULY 27

YOUR VERY OWN SPOT
IN THE SAIMAA LAKELAND

During the warm summer days, kids easily spend more time in the lake than on solid ground. Who can blame them? With such pure water, the lake is the place to be. And if you happen to visit Saimaa in winter, you can still go for a swim even if it's a bit chilly... You can experience Saimaa in countless ways, for example by fishing, sailing, cruising, rowing, canoeing, diving, hiking, cycling, berry picking, skiing, ice skating, relaxing in a hot sauna or just enjoying your cottage.

25% of the total area is pure, clean water

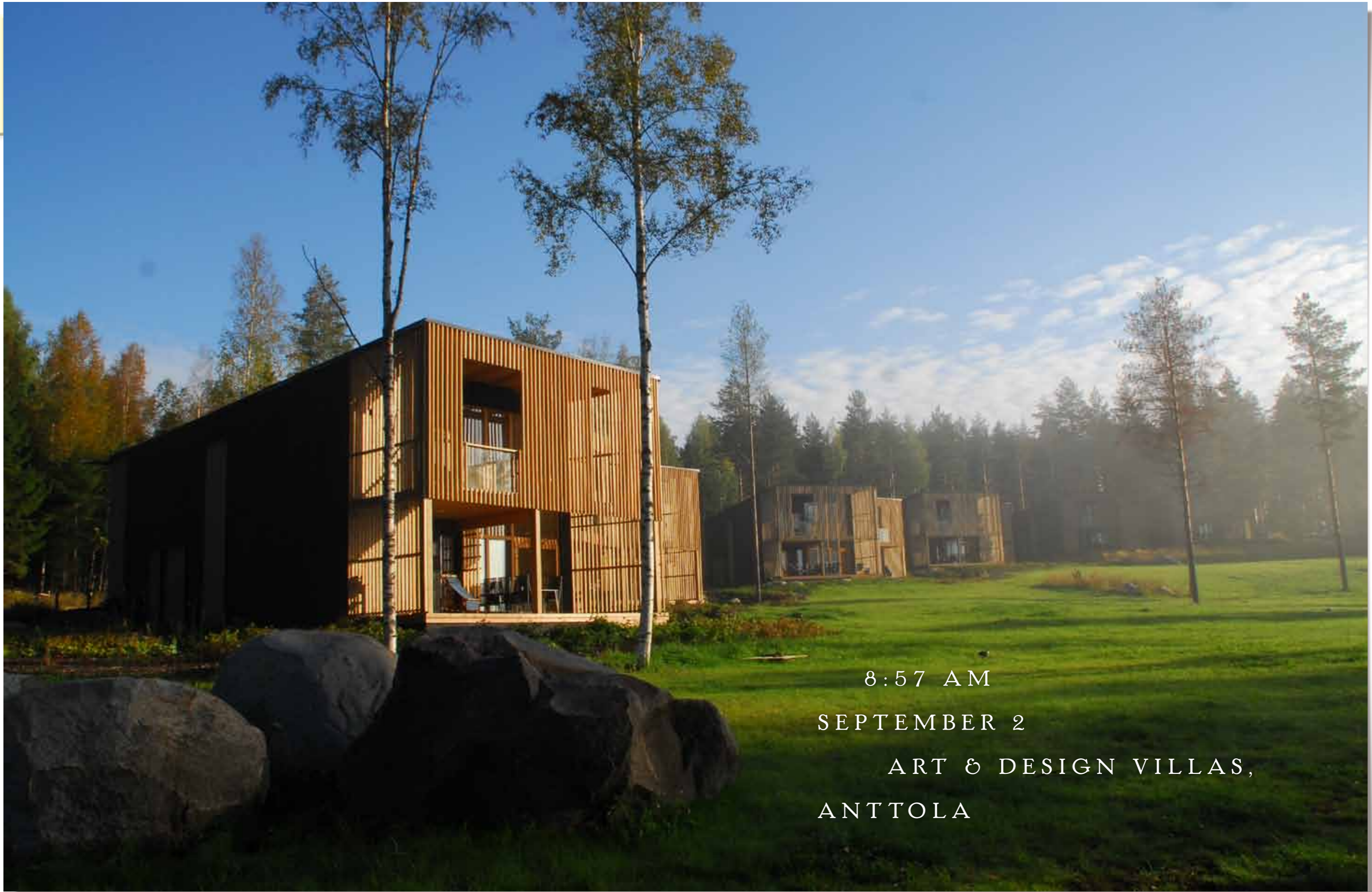
80% of the land area is forest

4,782 km² covered by water

7,000 lakes, countless ponds

5,000 km of streams and rivers

THE VISITSAIMAA REGION HAS THE HIGHEST CONCENTRATION OF FORESTS AND LAKES IN FINLAND.



8:57 AM

SEPTEMBER 2

ART & DESIGN VILLAS,
ANTTOLA

The VisitSaimaa region offers more than 43,000 cottages that are frequently used by 172,000 visitors. Many of the cottages are designed for year-round use. The cottages range from simple hideaways to unique design villas with all the modern conveniences you would ever wish for. Whatever your wishes may be, you can rest assured that just the right cottage will be waiting for you. All the

cottages are situated by the lakeside, and they all come with a sauna – and usually a rowing boat too.

To appreciate Finnish culture and the way of life here, you should really experience the charm of a cottage holiday. After all, if you ask a Finn what he is going to do on vacation, he will answer: “I’m going to my cottage, of course!”



8:33 PM
JULY 1
SAUNA 82°C

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There are over two million saunas in Finland, and there's certainly no shortage of them along the Saimaa shores. In fact, it would be hard to imagine a cottage without a sauna. Or a hotel without one. For Finns, the sauna is a place for physical and mental relaxation: throw some water on the stove and treat yourself to a good whipping with a "vasta", a bunch of fresh birch branches. Afterwards cool down either by sitting on the porch or by taking a dip in the lake – when it's frozen, just cut out a hole! Seasoned sauna

enthusiasts repeat this ritual many times. The sauna is an integral part of the Finnish identity, so in order to say that you've really been to Finland, you'll have to take a sauna. The most traditional version is a smoke sauna without a chimney, but you can enjoy a unique sauna experience just as well in an electrically heated sauna.

4:37 AM
JUNE 13
SECRET COVE

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With 13,000 islands, the VisitSaimaa region has a total shoreline almost 30,000 kilometres long – even longer than the shoreline of France. There’s a secret cove for everyone, and if you are very quiet and very very lucky, you might catch a glimpse of a hydrodynamic yet friendly looking head with whiskers. It belongs to one of the most endangered seal species in the world – the Saimaa

Ringed Seal, which was separated from the ringed seal population when the land rose after the last ice age. Most of the population of just 260 seals lives in the Kolovesi and Linnansaari national parks. Another exciting national park in the area, Repovesi, presents hikers with abundant wildlife, rugged back-woods and dozens of lakes.

10:23 PM

JUNE 22

SUNSET IN THE SAVONLINNAN HARBOUR



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Founded in 1639 around the medieval Olavinlinna Castle, Savonlinna was once a border town between Sweden and Russia. The castle still stands tall on a small island in Kyrönsalmi strait – you can take a cruise on an old steamer to admire the castle from the water or you can view the interior of the castle while attending the world-famous opera festival. Afterwards you can enjoy the inimitable small town atmosphere in the picturesque market place. Another of the region's vibrant centres, Mikkeli was a meeting point for Vikings and trappers for more than 6,000 years and today the market place in Mikkeli is a popular meeting point for locals and visitors alike. Mikkeli has been an

important centre throughout the history of Finland. For example, Marshal Mannerheim and his staff were headquartered there during the Second World War.

There's room for everyone in the VisitSaimaa region: even though the area is almost as big as Belgium, there are only 12 inhabitants per square kilometre. Half of the region's 160,000 inhabitants live in urban areas, the other half in the countryside.

Mikkeli
49,000
inhabitants

Savonlinna
28,000
inhabitants



1:44 PM
 AUGUST 9
 ENJOYING
 THE FLAVOURS
 OF SAIMAA

The VisitSaimaa region boasts a rich food culture. Naturally, fish is a key ingredient, and it is served in many ways: baked, grilled, fried, smoked and even raw. An absolute must is vendace (known locally as “muikku”), a small but delicious whitefish. Try for example “paistetut muikut”, fried vendace served with mashed potatoes.

In the VisitSaimaa region, the Nordic influences of Finnish cuisine are combined with Russian flavours. The tastes are simple

yet rich, and there’s always a lot of bread, root vegetables, meat and fish on offer. Whatever the season, freshness is always an integral part of the region’s culinary culture.

The flavours of the forest are also to be savoured: arctic berries and mushrooms can be picked throughout the late summer and autumn. Naturally, they are at their best when fresh, but they can be given a new lease of life conserved, or even as a wine.



11:05 AM
FEBRUARY 28
TOUR SKATING
IN LINNANSAARI
NATIONAL PARK

The ever-changing face of Saimaa freezes when the frost comes, inviting you to explore its shores. Linnansaari National Park boasts 50 kilometres of well-tended tour skating routes over the ice – but a number of shorter routes are also within your reach, for example in Punkaharju, Kerimäki, Mikkeli and Mäntyharju. The thickness of the ice on the track is normally 20–80 centimetres and the skating

season spans from mid-January to the end of March. But if skating is not your thing, you can also enjoy the stunning scenery on cross-country skis or with snowshoes. Ice fishing is another great way to experience the frozen lakes. Simply drill a small hole in the ice, sit on your stool and catch your own fish for your day's meal.

FACTS AND FIGURES

Accommodation

Select from a wide range of high-quality accommodation, including cottages, holiday centres and city hotels. Many of the region's manor houses and farmhouses have also been renovated for guests so that you can experience the Saimaa way of life at its best. Whether you are looking to enjoy the peace of nature by yourself or whether you prefer the convenience of having services close at hand, the region's pristine nature and crystal clear lakes are always nearby.

Getting around

After you have reached Helsinki, you can fly conveniently to Savonlinna or take train or bus to either Mikkeli or Savonlinna. Being an ecological traveler is easy thanks to the abundance of daily bus and train connections to the region. In July, there's a daily, yet inexpensive Savonlinna express bus connection from Helsinki via Mikkeli (further information: Savonlinna Travel). Probably the most flexible way to discover the labyrinth of lakes and forests is, however, with your own or rental car. The driving culture in Finland is safe. Of course, you can also explore the region by canoe, rowing boat, motor boat or sail boat. You can also take a cruise from one city to another to enjoy the scenery and the traditional, peaceful way of travelling across the lakes.

Weather

Belonging to the temperate weather zone with cold winters, Finland has four distinctive seasons. The mean temperature during the warmest month is no lower than 10°C and the mean temperature will not rise above -3°C during the coldest month. Typically, the highest temperatures in July are around 30°C and the lowest in February around -30°C. Rainfall is moderate in all seasons.

Being on such a high latitude means that sunlight prevails in summer – the nature is awake around the clock and the sun just dips below the horizon before rising again to meet the new, exciting day.

The VisitSaimaa region can be reached easily by plane, train or car

Air timetables:	Finncomm www.fc.fi
Train timetables:	VR www.vr.fi
Bus timetables:	Matkahuolto www.matkahuolto.fi

Travel times

hours	by car	Mikkeli	Savonlinna	by train	Mikkeli	Savonlinna
Helsinki	2:43	4:18		2:38	4:27	
Mikkeli		1:39				



Distances

	Mikkeli	Savonlinna
Helsinki	232	335
Tampere	258	360
Lappeenranta	109	158
Mikkeli		100
Savonlinna	100	
St. Petersburg	306	344

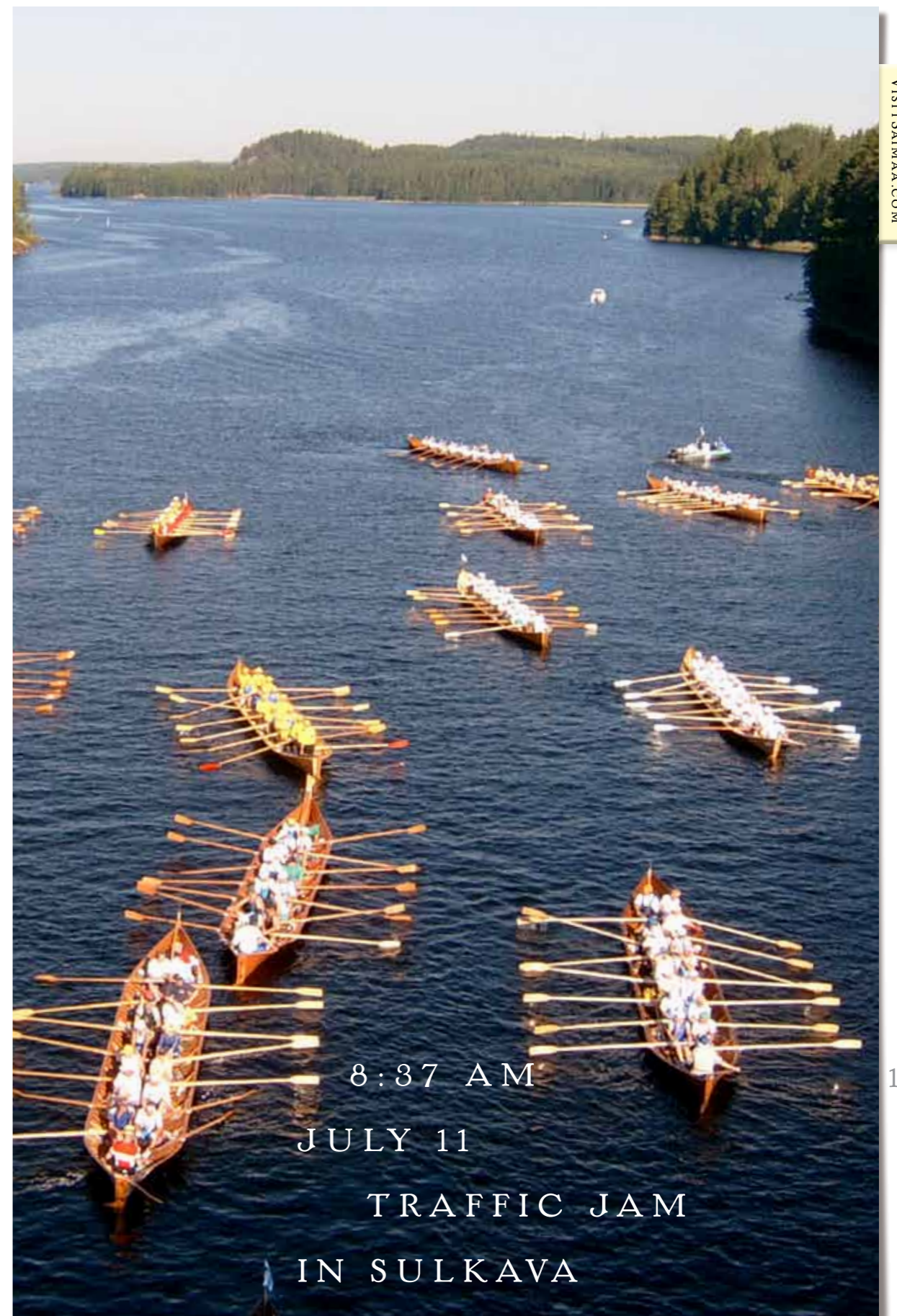
Mean air temperatures

	mean	highest	lowest
January	-8.3°C	-5.5°C	-11.5°C
February	-8.3°C	-5.1°C	-11.6°C
March	-3.3°C	0.3°C	-6.9°C
April	2.0°C	6.2°C	-2.0°C
May	9.3°C	14.7°C	3.9°C
June	14.3°C	19.3°C	9.3°C
July	16.3°C	21.3°C	11.6°C
August	14.1°C	18.8°C	10.0°C
September	8.7°C	12.6°C	5.3°C
October	3.5°C	6.1°C	1.1°C
November	-1.9°C	0.3°C	-4.1°C
December	-6.1°C	-3.5°C	-9.2°C

Source: Mikkeli Suonsaari

Longest and shortest days

June 21:	19 hours 30 minutes
December 21:	5 hours 16 minutes



One of the biggest rowing events in the world, the Sulkava Rowing Festival attracts annually some 10,000 rowers wanting to measure their strength against a 60-kilometre route around the island of Partalansaari. The labyrinth of Saimaa is easily explored by canoe, sail boat, motor boat or even bike.



1 OLAVINLINNA CASTLE

The northernmost surviving medieval stone fortress in the world, Olavinlinna Castle was founded in 1475 on a steep rocky islet on the East-West border to protect the strategically important Savo region. The castle is open to visitors year round. Olavinlinna also serves as the spectacular setting for the annual Savonlinna Opera Festival in July and other public events throughout the year.

2 HEADQUARTERS MUSEUM

Mikkeli was the location of the headquarters of the Finnish Armed Forces in 1939-40 and 1941-44. The permanent exhibition at the Headquarters Museum presents the history of the headquarters, as well as the main events of the war years. The museum also features Marshal Mannerheim's office as it was during the war. Open daily May-August and Friday-Sunday during the rest of the year.

3 KERIMÄKI CHURCH

The world's largest Christian wooden church, Kerimäki Church can seat 3,000 with standing room for an additional 2,000 people. The church is 45 metres long, 42 metres wide and 27 metres high. The church is open to visitors daily throughout the summer and by appointment in wintertime.

4 LUSTO - FINNISH FOREST MUSEUM

The Finnish Forest Museum in Punkaharju presents exhibitions, theme days, work demonstrations and other events related to Finland's forest culture. Lusto is open year round.

5 KENKÄVERO VICARAGE

This beautifully restored vicarage beside Lake Saimaa is one of the most visited attractions in the region. The grounds include a café-restaurant and boutique where visitors will find high-quality and unique Finnish handicrafts, design products and delicacies. Kenkävero is open year round.

6 PUNKAHARJU RIDGE

Formed around 8,400 years ago at the end of the Ice Age, this 7-kilometre-long ridge is today a nature conservation area. Visitors can explore the ridge on foot, by bicycle or by car along the scenic route.

7 LINNANSAARI NATIONAL PARK

Linnansaari National Park is a paradise for boaters. The national park comprises 40 kilometres of Lake Saimaa and approximately 130 islands. There are also several camping sites, campfire places and cooking shelters in the park. Linnansaari Island has a camping site and signed hiking paths. In summertime a ferry service operates between the island and mainland. Guided tours are available, and visitors can also rent rowing boats and canoes. In wintertime skating trails cross the ice. The most famous inhabitants of this wilderness are the Saimaa Ringed Seal and the osprey.

8 KOLOVESI NATIONAL PARK

The wilderness in Kolovesi National Park offers an attractive setting for canoeing or rowing in the midst of the peaceful landscape. The national park covers an area of 2,300 hectares. There are also two marked nature trails for hiking.

9 REPOVESI NATIONAL PARK

The landscape in Repovesi National Park consists of vast uninhabited forests, bold steep-faced cliffs and dozens of clear lakes and ponds. Repovesi is one of Southern Finland's most popular hiking destinations.

10 SIIKALAHTI BIRD WETLAND

Siikalahti is the finest inland bird lake in Finland and an internationally significant bird wetland close to the Russian border. Over 250 bird species have been identified in and around Siikalahti.

11 ASTUVANSALMI ROCK PAINTINGS

The most extensive rock paintings in the entire Nordic region can be found in Ristiina beside Lake Yövesi. They consist of over 60 prehistoric paintings depicting mystical patterns, human figures, elks and handprints. A guided trail leads to the paintings, and boat excursions are made across the lake in summertime.

12 PUULA-KYVYESI

The Puula and Kyyvesi lakes form a labyrinth of over a thousand islands that can be explored freely by boaters, who can tie up at over 30 purpose-built landing areas. The lakes are particularly popular for canoeing and fishing.

13 RETRETTI ART CENTRE

One of the largest centres of art in the Nordic region, Retretti is unique in that it has subterranean galleries 30 metres beneath the surface. Each summer Retretti presents special exhibitions from June to August.

14 SALMELA ART CENTRE

Salmela is one of the biggest and most famous art centres in Finland. Its multi-cultural program includes art exhibitions, concerts and lectures. The exhibitions concentrate on contemporary Finnish art of a high standard, including both established artists and young talent. Salmela is open from June to August.

15 RIIHISAARI, SAVONLINNA PROVINCIAL MUSEUM AND HISTORIC STEAMSHIPS

The small island of Riihisaari in Savonlinna is home to the Provincial Museum and the historic steamships Salama, Savonlinna and Mikko. The museum includes the Saimaa Nature Exhibition. Riihisaari is open year round.

16 SAVONLINNA OPERA FESTIVAL

The world famous Savonlinna Opera Festival is held in July amidst the spectacular setting of Olavinlinna Castle. Each year the festival presents a new programme of operas and concerts.

17 GERGIEV FESTIVAL MIKKELI

This annual international music festival in Mikkeli features an impressive programme of classical performances under the direction of Valeri Gergiev. The concerts are held at the end of June and beginning of July.

18 KESÄMAA

This adventure park is located in Punkaharju and offers action on land and water for all members of the family from June to August.

19 VISULAHTI

This popular water and adventure park is located in Mikkeli and offers exciting activities for the entire family. Visulahti is open from June to August.

CRUISES ON LAKE SAIMAA

Scenic cruises depart from the main harbours in Savonlinna and Mikkeli from June to August, and charter cruises are available at all times when the lakes are not frozen. Scheduled cruises operate regularly along the routes Savonlinna-Punkaharju, Helsinki-Lappeenranta-Puumala-Savonlinna-Helsinki and Savonlinna-Kuopio from June to August.

CHARMS OF SAIMAA

Charms of Saimaa offers the most attractive and highest quality destinations in the Mikkeli and Savonlinna area to visitors who are interested in distinctive hotels or farm accommodation, stylish restaurants, nostalgic steamship cruises, boutiques, culture and exhibitions. www.charmingsaimaa.com

GREEN GOLD CULTURE ROAD

This signposted route twists and turns along the shores of Lake Saimaa amidst spectacular scenery all the way from Vihantasalmi in Mäntyharju to Punkaharju. In addition to beautiful views, the Green Gold Culture Road includes historic sights and popular attractions. The Lietvesi scenic road and Pistohiekkä encompass the most photographed lake scenery in Finland. A special route map is available.

For more information about the region, please contact:

SAVONLINNA TRAVEL LTD

Puistokatu 1, FI-57100 Savonlinna
Tel. +358 (0)600-3007
(€0.50/min + local network charge/
mobile call charge)
Fax. +358 (0)15 517 5123
info@savonlinnatravel.com
www.savonlinna.travel

MIKKELI TOURIST INFORMATION

Finland Travel Bureau
Porrassalmenkatu 23,
FI-50100 Mikkeli
Tel. +358 (0)10 826 0246
touristinfo@mikkeli.fi
www.travel.mikkeli.fi

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Encompassing the largest lake system in Finland, the VisitSaimaa region has the highest concentration of forests and lakes in the entire country. The region also includes two main urban centres, Mikkeli and Savonlinna, as well as their adjoining areas in the province of South Savo. Thank you for sharing its moments with us.



Savonlinna Travel Ltd
Puistokatu 1, FI-57100 Savonlinna
Tel. +358 (0)600-3007 (€0.50/min + local network charge/mobile call charge), Fax. +358 (0)15 517 5123
info@savonlinnatravel.com, www.savonlinna.travel



Mikkeli Tourist Information,
Finland Travel Bureau
Porrassalmenkatu 23, FI-50100 Mikkeli
Tel. +358 (0)10 826 0246
touristinfo@mikkeli.fi, www.travel.mikkeli.fi



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