



## Lake Saimaa The harmony of nature and culture

Finland's Saimaa lake district offers not only beautiful nature and scenic views, but also a variety of cultural attractions and experiences. There's the Finnish tango, the world-class opera festival in the globe's northernmost medieval castle, the famous Finnish sauna culture, and much, much more.

## Cultural experience

### Day 1: Varkaus – Caviar and the wonders of mechanical music

Lake Saimaa waterways that extend to the city centre, a lush natural environment and many destinations offer holidaymakers a many opportunities in the Varkaus region. Specialties include the city's own caviar and sturgeon delicacies as well as the home of amazing instruments, the Museum of Mechanical Music.

#### EAT AND SEE:

Come and enjoy the beautiful summer weather and good food at the same time! Restaurant Morton is open during summer every day unless if it is inclement weather.

The number one attraction of Varkaus is the unique **Mechanical Music Museum**. It is one of the best of its kind in Europe and is mentioned in tourist guidebooks abroad as one of the top ten destinations in Finland. Visitors to the Mechanical Music Museum can take a trip to yesteryear in a funny stand-up tour. The collection of instruments is unbelievable; music boxes, automatic pianos and orchestras, violins and accordions and hurdy gurdys from small table models to an enormous Amadeus. The grandest of all is the world's largest orchestra, a 75-man Popper Goliath. Every year, the museum personnel restore new devices for the exhibit.

**Art Centre Väinölä** is an idyllic wooden house in

the shadow of birch trees in the centre of Varkaus. In three gallery rooms – White hall – Blue moment – Twilight – there are changing art exhibits throughout the year. Furthermore there is an extensive basic collection of graphics, watercolours and sculptures in the building. Väinölä has professional framing, and a shop that sells artist supplies and posters.

#### STAY:

The spacious and high quality **Scandic Oscar** is located in the city center in Päiviönsaari, very near the culturally historical area of Varkaus, Old Varkaus. There are hotel rooms of many sizes in Hotel Oscar suitable even for demanding tastes. The same building also has a restaurant named **Restaurant Oscar** and a bar named Oscar's, as well as **Warkaus-sali** (Warkaus Hall) for conferences and concerts.





## Day 2: Savonlinna

As a popular destination on the shores of Saimaa, Savonlinna offers culture and small town magic for locals and visitors alike. With the world's northernmost medieval castle and the world famous opera festival, and the historical old town with its wooden houses and quaint shops and cafes, Savonlinna is a must for any visitor to the Saimaa region.

A walk around town, popping in some of the design shops and a visit to the market place to watch the local life will make a nice start to the day.

Savonlinna will celebrate **Opera festival** again in summer 2021, when the castle of Olavinlinna on the shore of Lake Saimaa will again echo with a fascinating array of performances. This will include King Roger, which has seen a surge in popularity around the world, the festival's first baroque opera by Handel, Karita Mattila's gala concert, and beloved classics: Carmen, La traviata and The Barber of Seville. Visiting productions will be performed by Croatian National Theatre from Rijeka, the European Capital of Culture.

## SEE AND EAT:

**Olavinlinna castle** is the crown jewel of Savonlinna. Majestic and steeped in history, the walls of the castle have plenty of fascinating stories to tell – including the story of the maiden buried in the castle wall for treason. Nearby **Riihisaari Museum** brings the story of Saimaa and its inhabitants to life. Exhibitions for the whole family.

Lake cruises are a big part of summer of Savonlinna and its surrounding areas. A cruise along Lake Saimaa on a nostalgic steamboat or a handy motorboat is a relaxing way to spend a sunny summer day while enjoying the scenery around Savonlinna. There are daily scenery cruises to Lake Saimaa during the summer season, mainly between 1.6-31.8. A scenic cruise is an easy and affordable way to see the wonderful scenery of Lake Saimaa and also to see the beautiful city of Savonlinna and its attractions from the lake.

When visiting Savonlinna, we recommend you to try some local food – 'Muikku', these small white fish are caught from the nearby Lake Saimaa. **Cafe-restaurant Saima** offers "Muikku" fried with rye flour and butter, and served with Ulla's fresh creamed potatoes, or try our delicious creamy salmon soup'

## STAY:

**Spahotel Casino** is located on a magnificent lakeside site on Kasino island, right in the centre of the city of Savonlinna. The hotel complex includes a spa, the hotel, a restaurant and a wide range of wellness and free-time facilities and services. Also the Savonlinna Hall, just across the forecourt, offers concerts, theatre performance and other cultural events. At the end of the day, you are able to retire to your hotel room in a matter of minutes.

**Järvisydän** is a vibrant resort with plenty of activities or peace and quiet, whatever you wish to do. Nestled in a bay of Lake Saimaa, the resort offers luxury accommodation, an amazing spa and lots of nature activities. The resort has been run by Heiskanen family since 1658 and is steeped in tradition. You may even spot a curious Saimaa ringed seal here – the rarest seal in the world with a population of only 400.



## Day 3: Puumala & Saimaa ringed seal

"Various vendace and several salmon in the vast waters of Saimaa. Cosy cottage renters and hundreds of holiday makers by the bays of the lake. A thousand travelers of the blue, with tons of things to do. Ancient rock paintings a dozen from when the waters were still high, but where now only the seagulls fly by. Only one great bridge, one dear church, one bustling port and one steamboat Wenno to cruise on in the wonderful sceneries of Puumala!"

Niinisaari is a vibrant village in the southern archipelago of Puumala. Even if you are not renting a cottage with us this time, Niinisaari makes for a great day-trip for visitors of all ages. Get into the mood by taking the cable ferry to the island. The cable ferry is in service all year round, 24 hours a day.

## SEE, EAT AND STAY

The Saimaa ringed seal is one of the rarest seals in the world, and it only lives in lake Saimaa in Finland. Puumala is probably one of the best places in lake Saimaa region to spot this rare seal. Take a cruise with full electric operating boat by LakelandGTE. The landscapes in Puumala are fantastic and there are over 20 Saimaa seals living in the area. The first five weeks after ice-out are the best weeks of the year to see seals lying on a rock sunbathing, as the adult seals are changing their fur during that period. Later in summer seals can normally be seen only in water



as they come breathing in surface.

**Restaurant Niinipuu** in Puumala serves local Finnish food. The restaurant is built in a stone barn in the grounds of Okkola. You are most welcome to take a visit for tasting local delicacies, grab a cold drink or treat yourself with rye-crust blueberry pie! Depending on the season and the catch, the restaurant may serve whitebait caught the previous night in Lake Saimaa or chanterelles picked from Niinisaari. Restaurant's speciality is plank-roasted rainbow trout from Puumala.

**Sahanlahti** is a small, family run resort with hotel and cottage accommodation and two restaurants serving the best of local food made from seasonal ingredients. Both restaurants offer the most amazing lakeside views and the small guest harbour hosts visitors from near and far in the summertime. Built around an old sawmill, Sahanlahti is steeped in history and has a story or two to tell you as you wander around the resort. Food based on high-quality, fresh and local products and the dedication to ethical and responsible farming are the cornerstones of Sahanlahti dining. All of this and the skill of people growing and preparing your food can be clearly tasted on your plate when dining at the atmospheric Koskivahti restaurant at Sahanlahti.

The **Liehtalanniemi Museum Estate and nature reserve**, tucked in a sheltered cove on Niinisaari, will take you back in time. See what life was like in the archipelago in the beginning of the 20th century and hear the story of Jalmari Reponen, the last owner of the estate.

## Day 3: Mikkeli, Anttola & Astuvansalmi rock paintings

Mikkeli, the headquarters during three different wars, is located in South-Savo, in the heart of Lakeland Finland. The city, which was



Astuvansalmi therefore date back to approximately 4000-2200 BCE. The painting area is around 16.5 m wide and 5.5 m tall.

Take a guided boat cruise to Astuvansalmi rock paintings from **Kallioniemi restaurant**.

## SEE, EAT AND STAY

**Halla Resort** is the perfect destination for your holiday – there is something for everyone from private luxury villas with a special touch of the local nature included, to tasty, local food served in with a lovely view of Lake Saimaa. If pampering in the spa or sporty activities are more your thing, you will be just as happy here!

**Tertti Manor** is a functioning farm with its own herb garden and eco-certified forest, which has been owned by the same family since the late 1800's. The stunning manor house serves as a delightful restaurant serving fresh, local food in historical surroundings. The five farm hotel rooms are cosy and close to nature – you will be sure to sleep soundly and wake up to the sweet sound of silence. The culinary delights of Tertti Manor are regionally and nationally renowned. Their food philosophy is based on clean, local ingredients, mostly grown on their own land. You will get a peek of their delicious farming cellar full of produce from the summer and autumn gone and hear fascinating stories of the life at the manor house from years gone by.

