



Image: Pulkkilanharju esker, Johannes Sipponen

# Salpausselkä - Saimaa 7days GEOPARK EXCURSION

in Lakeland Finland



Image: Neltvuoren Kalliomaasto



#saimaageopark  
#salpausselkägeopark

 [Salpausselkageopark.fi](https://www.salpausselkageopark.fi)  [Saimaageopark.fi](https://www.saimaageopark.fi)





Image: View from the Lahti Sports Centre ski jumping tower at Salpausselkä, Kati Komulainen

This itinerary explores two UNESCO Global Geoparks in Finland – Salpausselkä and Saimaa – each offering captivating charm through local tales of nature, culture, and history. During the six-day trip, you will get to explore the varied sites of these two Geoparks in the Finnish Lakeland. The itinerary has been carefully designed to offer the most diverse experience possible, and includes a range of options to ensure that every traveller can find activities to suit them. Choose to visit all sites or just some. In addition, there is also time for relaxation and self-exploration during the trip, so you can enjoy your holiday in a way that suits you!




Image: Hollola medieval stone church, Marinella Himari

**TRIP DURATION: 7 DAYS**  
**RECOMMENDED MONTHS: MAY-OCTOBER**

## DAY 1 - ARRIVAL IN FINLAND, HELSINKI AIRPORT

### ARRIVAL IN HELSINKI, FINLAND

Car hire from Helsinki Airport: Europcar & Hertz.  
Or take a train to Salpausselkä Geopark, Lahti.  
Car Hire from Lahti: Europcar & Hertz.

 100 km, 1h 10min

 58 min

### 1 ARRIVAL IN LAHTI - SALPAUSSELKÄ GEOPARK

Lahti, the main city in Salpausselkä Geopark, can be reached in an hour from the international airport. The city offers a perfect blend of stunning nature and vibrant culture. With its picturesque lakes, green areas and modern urban vibe, the city is an ideal destination for outdoor enthusiasts and culture seekers alike.

Stay the night in the city centre, at Sokos Hotel Lahden Seurahuone or GreenStar Hotel Lahti. Savour local delicacies at one of the city's restaurants.

 Aleksanterinkatu 14, 15100 Lahti



Image: City of Lahti by Lake Vesijärvi, City of Lahti





Image: Vääksi Canal

## DAY 2 - LAHTI - HOLLOLA - ASIKKALA - SYSMÄ 100KM

> Drive 1,5km 5min

2

### LAHTI SPORTS CENTRE & HÄRÄNSILMÄ KETTLE POND

Visit Lahti Sports Centre with its iconic skijumping towers at the Salpausselkä ridge. Adore stunning views over the lakeside city from the highest tower. Explore the recreational forest area and visit the beautiful Häränsilmä kettle pond.

 *Salpausselänkatu 8, 15110 Lahti*

> Drive 8,5km 15min

3

### HOLLOLA, TIIRISMAA HILL & PIRUNPESÄ GORGE

Visit Tiirismaa to see Pirunpesä (Devil's nest) on your way to the old village of Hollola. Pirunpesä is an impressive gorge cutting into the quartzite rock in Tiirismaa. Walk to Pirunpesä along a marked forest trail (850 m one-way).

 *Arvi Hauvosentie 2, 15860 Hollola*

> Drive 12km 15min

4

### OLD VILLAGE OF HOLLOLA (HOLLOLA KK) & KAPATUOSIA HILL FORT

Hollola village is a nationally valuable cultural heritage site. At the foot of the Kapatuosia hill lies the grand medieval stone church of Hollola. From viewing tower at the top of the hill opens a beautiful view over the lake and forests.

 *Rantatie 917, Hollola kk*



Have lunch in Hollola village at the restaurant Vanha Kunnantupa in the old wooden municipal hall or in Asikkala by Vääksi canal at the restaurant Kanavan Kruunu.




Image: Päijätsalo viewing tower

> Drive 33km 35min

5

### ASIKKALA, OLD VÄÄKSY VILLAGE & VÄÄKSY CANAL

Vääksi is a picturesque village located along the Vääksi Canal. The Vääksi Canal, completed in 1871, connects the lakes Vesijärvi and Päijänne. Stroll along the canalside and watch the boats passing through the locks. Päijännetalo visitor centre offers local products and interesting exhibitions.

 *Meijeritie 1, 17200 Vääksi*

> Drive 15,5km 15min

6

### ASIKKALA, PULKKILANHARJU ESKER - PÄIJÄNNE NATIONAL PARK

Drive along Finland's most scenic route on the unique Pulkkilanharju esker running across the vast Lake Päijänne. Stop to enjoy the wonderful sceneries. There is also a 4-km-long nature trail to explore.

 *Pulkkilantie 955, Asikkala*

> Drive 28,5km 25min

7

### SYSMÄ TOWN CENTRE & SUOPELTO

Drive through the centre of Sysmä, stop to make use of the services or visit the nationally valuable cultural heritage site around the medieval church. Stay the night by the Lake Päijänne in Suopelto at Ilola Inn, a boutique hotel in a beautifully renovated 138-year-old wooden building, located 7km from Sysmä centre.

 *Suopellontie 703, 19700 Sysmä*





Image: Lemmenharju Nature trail, Kati Komulainen

## DAY 3 - SYSMÄ - HEINOLA - VIERUMÄKI 78KM

> Drive 4km 10min

### 8 SYSMÄ, PÄIJÄTSALO ISLAND & VIEWING TOWER


The rocky island of Päijätsalo on the eastern shore of Lake Päijänne, accessible via a bridge, belongs partly to the Päijänne National Park. Along the 4-km hiking trail, there is an over 120-year-old viewing tower at the hilltop, offering a magnificent view over the lake.

 Sorolantie 28, 19700 sysmä

> Drive 33km 30min

### 9 SYSMÄ, ONKINIEMI ROCKING BOULDER

On the way to Heinola, stop to see the Onkiniemi "moving rock", a large erratic boulder standing on rock smoothed by the continental ice sheet, situated along the highway.

 Onkiniementie, 19230 Onkiniemi

> Drive 26km 25min



Image: Onkiniemi Rocking Boulder, Kati Komulainen



Image: Kylpylänranta Beach in Heinola

### 10 HEINOLA CITY CENTRE & NATIONAL URBAN PARK

Stroll along the enchanting riverside in the National Urban Park and enjoy lunch at one of the cosy restaurants. Dip in the clear water at Kylpylänranta beach.


 Maaherrankatu 1, 18100 Heinola

> Drive 15km 20min

### 11 HEINOLA, VIERUMÄKI RESORT & LEMMENHARJU NATURE TRAIL

Vierumäki Resort & Sport Institute of Finland offers beautiful nature and a wide range of activities. Lemmenharju Nature Trail runs along steep-sided ridges and the shores of clear-watered little lakes.

Accommodation at Hotel Fennada - a luxury stay above the picturesque Lake Valkjärvi.

 Kaskelantie 10, 17130 Vierumäki

After breakfast drive towards the city of Mikkeli. Its time to explore Saimaa Geopark.

> Drive 107km 1h20min






Image: Lietvesi, Saimaa Geopark

## DAY 4 - VIERUMÄKI - MIKKELI - PUUMALA 178KM

### ARRIVAL IN MIKKELI - SAIMAA GEOPARK

#### 12 MIKKELI, URPOLA NATURE CENTRE


Urpola nature center, located in Mikkeli's oldest residential building from 1782, is a Saimaa Geopark natural and cultural site and visitor center.

 Selännekatu 30, 50100 Mikkeli

> Drive 2,5km 10min

#### 13 MIKKELI, NAISVUORI

Mikkeli's Naisvuori, a 120-metre-high rocky mountain in the city centre, and its observation tower are one of Mikkeli's most popular attraction.

 Mikonkatu 25, 50100 Mikkeli

> Drive 2km 5min

#### 14 MIKKELI, KENKÄVERO, LUNCH

Kenkävero, a stunning tourist attraction, features restored buildings, exhibitions, handicrafts, gardens, workshops, and a daily restaurant serving daily food throughout the year.

 Pursialankatu 6, Mikkeli



Image: Kenkävero

> Drive 37km 40min

#### 15 MIKKELI, NEITVUORI


Neitvuori is a well-known lookout point with a magnificent view of Lake Saimaa from the top.

 Neitvuorentie 660, 52100 Mikkeli

> Drive 69,5km 1h

#### 16 PUUMALA, LIETVESI

Lietvesi Landscape Road is one of the most photographed landscapes in Finland.

 Lietvedentie, 52200 Puumala

> Drive 16,5km 15min

#### 17 PUUMALA, PISTOHIEKKA, ACCOMMODATION

Pistohiekka is a fine natural site with a long tradition in Puumala.


 Pistohiekan raitti 33, Puumala



Image: Sahanlahti, Saimaa Geopark



Image: Naisvuori, Saimaa Geopark





Image: Imatrankoski, goSaimaa

## DAY 5 - PUUMALA - RUOKOLAHTI - IMATRA 69KM

> 28km 45min, NOTE! ferry on the road

### 18 PUUMALA, LIEHTALANNIEMI

The Liehtalanniemi Museum and Nature Reserve, situated in a sheltered cove on Niinisaari.

 *Niinisaari, Ylössaarentie 205, 52200 Puumala*

> Drive 72,5km 1h 20min

### 19 RUOKOLAHTI, KOLMIKÖYTINEN ROCK PAINTING


The Kolmiköytinen rock painting is one of the most spectacular rock paintings in South Karelia. Located 3.5–4.5 m above the water level.

 *Kirjamoinniementie 31, 56140 Ruokolahti*

> Drive 15km 15min

### 20 RUOKOLAHTI CHURCH HILL

Ruokolahti Church Hill is located in a beautiful location right on the shores of Lake Saimaa.

 *Ukonsalmentie 5, 56100 Ruokolahti*

> Drive 21,5km 20min

### 21 IMATRA, RIMPSU-REETAN ANKKURI, LUNCH

Rimpsu-Reetan Ankkuri is a cozy restaurant and café situated in Imatra harbor.

 *Lammassaarentie 11, 55420 Imatra*

### 22 IMATRA, LAMMASSAARI


Lammassaari is a beautiful ridge island in the Ukonniemi outdoor recreation area in Imatra.

 *Lammassaarentie, 55420 Imatra*

> Drive 6km 10min

### 23 IMATRA, VISITOR CENTRE

The visitor centre offers a wealth of information on geology and the development history of the Saimaa region.

 *Virastokatu 1, 55120 Imatra*

> Drive 3km 5min

### 24 IMATRA, IMATRANKOSKI RAPIDS

Imatrankoski rapids was formed about 5,700 years ago, when flowing waters of River Vuoksi eroded a channel into the fractured bedrock.

 *Imatrankoskentie 3, 55100 Imatra*

> Drive 450m 2min

### 25 IMATRA, VALTIONHOTELLI, ACCOMMODATION

Imatra Valtionhotelli (State Hotel) is a unique attraction and hotel.


 *Torkkelinkatu 2, 55100 Imatra*





Image: Lappeenranta fortress, gosaima

## DAY 6 - IMATRA - LAPPEENRANTA 35KM

> Drive 39km 35min

### 26 LAPPEENRANTA, SAIMAA CANAL

Saimaa Canal connect Saimaa and the gulf of Finland. Canal completed 1856 and its 42,9km long.

*Läntinen kanavatie, 53300 Lappeenranta*

> Drive 7,5km 15min

### 27 LAPPEENRANTA, FORTRESS & HARBOR

Lappeenranta Fortress, a historic district with a rich history dating back to the Russian era, now houses private residences, handicraft workshops, and cultural and business premises.

*Kristiinankatu 3-5, 53900 Lappeenranta*

> Drive 1,5km 5min

### 28 LAPPEENRANTA, TUJU TAPROOM, LUNCH

Tuju Taproom, Pizzeria & Shop is situated on the scenic Rakuunamäki in Lappeenranta.

*Soittokunnanraitti 3, 53900 Lappeenranta*



Image: Saimaa Canal, Saimaa Geopark



Image: Rakuunamäki, Veera Hakkarainen

### 29 LAPPEENRANTA, RAKUUNAMÄKI

Rakuunamäki is the best-preserved barracks area in Europe, purpose-built for the cavalry. The Lappeenranta Lakeside route (Rantaraitti) runs along the shore of Rakuunamäki.

### 30 LAPPEENRANTA, HOTEL RAKUUNA, ACCOMODATION

Hotel is located in central Lappeenranta, on the historic Rakuunamäki.

*Mannerheiminkatu 8, 53900 Lappeenranta*





Image: goSaimaa

## DAY 7 - LAPPEENRANTA - HELSINKI AIRPORT 220KM

### 31 LAPPEENRANTA

Drive to Helsinki airport or return the rental car to the Lappeenranta office and take a train to airport.



> 220km 2h25Min



> 2h15min

### 32 HELSINKI AIRPORT

Return rental car to Helsinki Airport.

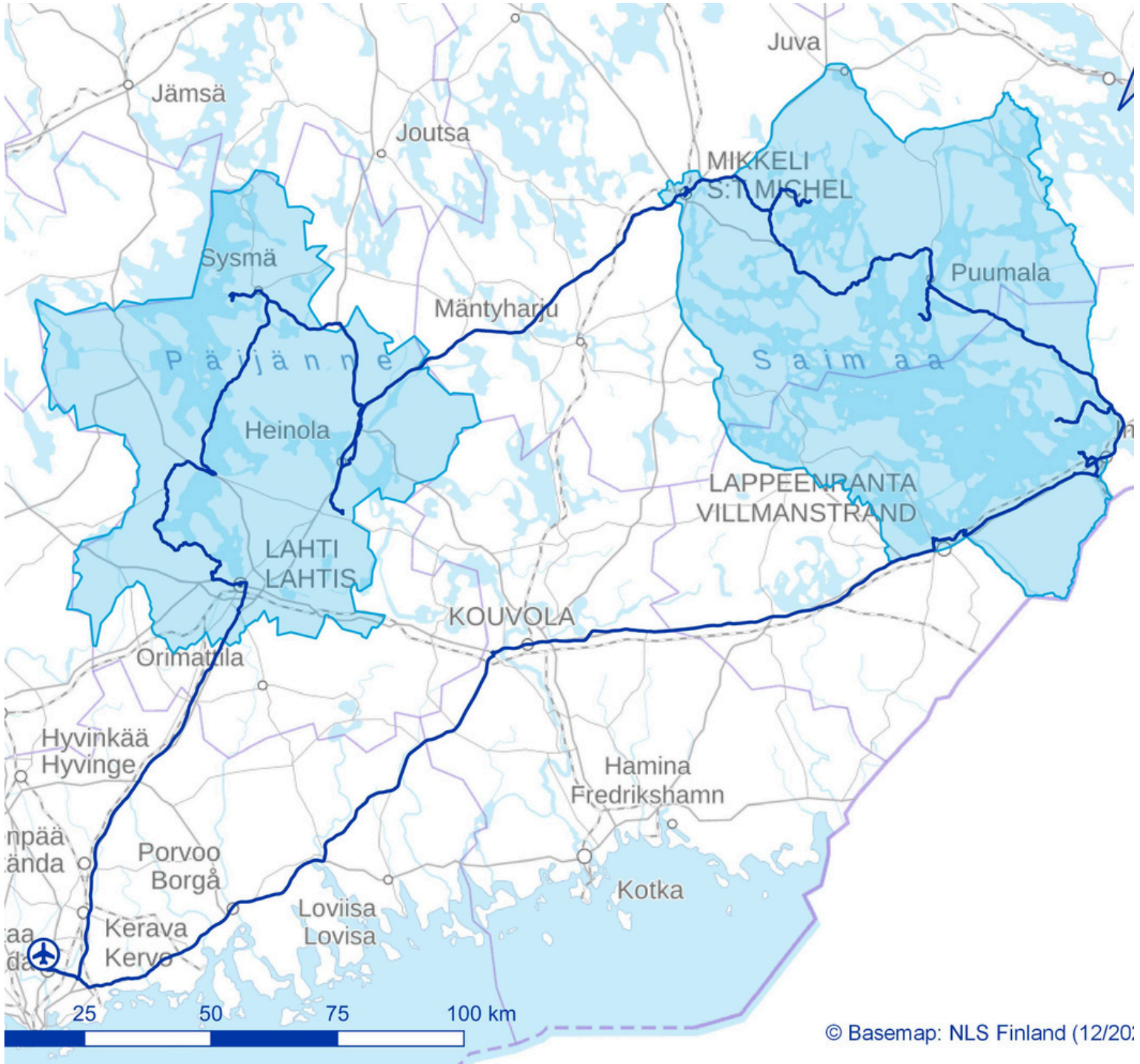


Image: Lietvesi, Timo Härmäläinen



# Salpausselkä - Saimaa 7days GEOPARK EXCURSION

in Lakeland Finland





# SALPAUSSELKÄ UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARK

[www.salpausselkageopark.fi/en](http://www.salpausselkageopark.fi/en)

## 1. LAHTI CITY CENTRE

Lahti, the vibrant southernmost city of Finland's Lake District, is a city where urban charm meets breathtaking natural landscapes. Known as Finland's environmental capital, Lahti is the main city of the UNESCO designated Salpausselkä Geopark. It is a city small enough to get around on foot and big enough to enjoy a wide range of services and attractions, including interesting museums, restaurants and cafes, the stunning Sibelius Hall, the enchanting Lanu Sculpture Park and lakeviews in the lively passenger harbour.

## 2. LAHTI, SPORTS CENTRE & HÄRÄNSILMÄ KETTLE POND

Internationally known Lahti Sports Centre is the heart of the ski games. The area is rich with geology: the unique, diverse landscape of ridges, kettle holes, steep slopes and raised beaches. Häränsilmä is a beautiful kettle pond along a forest trail right next to the Sports Centre

## 3. HOLLOLA, TIIRISMAA & PIRUNPESÄ GORGE

Tiirismaa in Hollola is the highest point in Southern Finland, at 223 metres above sea level. The monumental Pirunpesä Gorge is a cliff fissure cutting through the quartzite rocks of Tiirismaa and has been a well-known visitor attraction since the 1800s. The walls of this impressive rock formation are up to 20 metres tall.

## 4. HOLLOLA, THE OLD VILLAGE & KAPATUOSIA HILL FORT

The village surrounding the Hollola Medieval Church, built in 1495-1510, is worth a small day trip. In addition to the picturesque stone church the tiny village offers art, shopping and cosy lunch restaurants. The Kapatuosia hill fort rises 56 meters above the level of Lake Vesijärvi. Kapatuosia Hill has a viewing tower that is open during the summer season and offers magnificent views over Lake Vesijärvi, the forests and cultural landscapes.

## 5. ASIKKALA, OLD VILLAGE OF VÄÄKSY & VÄÄKSY CANAL

The picturesque Vääksy Canal milieu enchants with its beauty throughout the year. Along the Vääksyntie road and canal you can find many lovely boutiques and restaurants. Vääksy Canal, completed in 1871, forms a navigable connection between Lakes Vesijärvi and Päijänne, that are separated by Second Salpausselkä ridge. It is one of the busiest inland waterway canals in Europe and Asikkala's best known attraction. The sandy beach of Kalmarinranta with its shallow waters next to the canal by Lake Vesijärvi is a lovely place for a swim.

## 6. ASIKKALA, PULKKILANHARJU ESKER & PÄIJÄNNE NATIONAL PARK

The 8-kilometre-long Pulkkilanharju consists of esker islands and underwater ridges. The narrow Pulkkilanharju Esker runs across Finland's second largest lake, Päijänne, offering spectacular views. It is part of a nationally valuable landscape area and belongs partly to Päijänne National Park.

## 7. SYSMÄ TOWN CENTRE & SUOPELTO

Sysmä is the northernmost of the Salpausselkä Geopark municipalities. The central area by the Majutvesi part of Lake Päijänne offers various services from cafes to grocery stores and swimming beaches and features a nationally valuable cultural heritage site around the medieval St. Olaf's Church. On the way to the lakeside area of Suopelto, you can visit the Päijätsalo island.



Image: View from Kapatuosia. Kati Komulainen



# SALPAUSSELKÄ UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARK

[www.salpausselkageopark.fi/en](http://www.salpausselkageopark.fi/en)

## 8. SYSMÄ, PÄIJÄTSALO ISLAND & VIEWING TOWER

The rocky island of Päijätsalo belongs partly to the Päijänne National Park and is accessible via a bridge. From the over 120-year-old viewing tower, you have a beautiful view of the largest open water area of Päijänne, Tehinselkä. The National Park's marked trails lead to the viewing tower on top of the island, as well as to the rocky beach path and the Pyydysniemi campfire site down by the shoreline.

## 9. SYSMÄ, ONKINIEMI ROCKING BOULDER

The massive "moving stone" of Onkiniemi, standing in a peculiar position, was declared a natural monument in 1961. According to the National Board of Antiquities' register, the distinctive boulder may have been used as a place of gathering and worship in ancient times. Easy to spot right beside the motorway E75, the boulder looks as if it could roll onto the highway at any moment. Beneath the boulder there is roche moutonnée, rock smoothed by the continental ice sheet.

## 10. HEINOLA CITY CENTRE & NATIONAL URBAN PARK

Heinola is one of the cities in Finland which have been granted the Ministry of the Environment's National Urban Park designation. Heinola National Urban Park combines the attractive city centre with its parks, museums and other buildings of cultural and historical value to the Kymijoki river, the lakes, the long Heinolanharju esker, the wilderness-like forest area and the cultural landscape of old rural Heinola village. The central area has all the city services right close to the waterfront. Kylpylänranta beach ("the spa beach") in the town centre offers services for swimmers, sauna-goers and boaters.



## 11. HEINOLA, VIERUMÄKI RESORT & LEMMENHARJU NATURE TRAIL

North of the Vierumäki Resort & Sport Institute of Finland, the second Salpausselkä ridge is joined by eskers formed of sand and gravel in meltwater tunnels or cracks in the ice sheet. Visitors can experience the picturesque scenery on Lemmenharju nature trail (2,5 / 4 km), which runs along the narrow and steep-sided eskers, surrounded by small lakes. The trail starts by the Valkjärvi lake behind the Sport Institute's main building Kaskela.



# SAIMAA UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARK

[www.saimaageopark.fi/en](http://www.saimaageopark.fi/en)



Image: Imatrankoski, goSaimaa

## 12. MIKKELI, URPOLA NATURE CENTRE

Urpola Nature Centre is a nature and cultural site of Saimaa Geopark and serves as a guide centre for Saimaa Geopark. Urpola Nature Centre is located in the oldest residential building in Mikkeli, dating back to 1782.

## 13. MIKKELI, NAISVUORI

Mikkeli's Naisvuori is a rocky mountain about 120 metres high in the city centre. Both Naisvuori and its observation tower are among Mikkeli's most popular attractions. From the top of the mountain you can see far into the distance, making it an ideal place to learn about the geology of the region. There is also an observation café at the top of the hill.

## 14. MIKKELI, KENKÄVERO

Kenkävero, magnificent tourist attraction, offers beautiful restored buildings, exhibitions, handicrafts, gardens, workshops, and daily food in a restaurant throughout the year.

## 15. MIKKELI, NEITVUORI

Neitvuori is a well-known lookout point, from the top of which you can enjoy a spectacular view of Lake Saimaa. An extensive network of paths with signposts indicates the active use of the site.

## 16. PUUMALA, LIETVESI

Lietvesi Landscape Road is one of the most photographed landscapes in Finland. The road was completed in 1955 and the Lietvesi bridge replaced the ferry link in 1985.

## 17. PUUMALA, PISTOHIEKKA

Pistohiekka is a fine natural site with a long tradition in Puumala. Pistohiekka is a 150 km long estuarine formation layered on the side of a discontinuous ridge sequence.

## 18. PUUMALA, LIEHTALANNIEMI

The Liehtalanniemi Museum and Nature Reserve, located in a sheltered cove on Niinisaari, offers an insight into early 20th-century island life and the world of the last master, Jalmari Reponen.

## 19. RUOKOLAHTI, KOLMIKÖYTINEN ROCK PAINTING

The rock painting on the Kolmiköytisienvuori hill is one of the most spectacular in South Karelia, located 3.5–4.5 m above the water level. The painting measures 135 cm x 345 cm, and its red and gold colour has been exceptionally well preserved and intense.

## 20. RUOKOLAHTI, CHURCH HILL

Ruokolahti Church Hill is located in a beautiful location right on the shores of Lake Saimaa. The buildings and monuments of the church hill and the natural beauty surrounding the hill form a memorable whole.



Image: Puumalansalmi, Saimaa Geopark



## SAIMAA UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARK

[www.saimaageopark.fi/en/](http://www.saimaageopark.fi/en/)

### 21. IMATRA, RIMPSU-REETAN ANKKURI

Rimpsu-Reetan Ankkuri is a warmly atmospheric restaurant and café on the Lake Saimaa in Imatra harbour. Rimpsu is rye pie baked according to a local grandmother's traditional recipe.

### 22. IMATRA, LAMMASSAARI

Lammassaari is a beautiful ridge island in the Ukkonniemi outdoor recreation area in Imatra. Lammassaari tells the history of the landscape in three time levels.

### 23. IMATRA, VISITOR CENTRE

The Saimaa Geopark Visitor Centre in Imatra provides information on geology and the history of Lake Saimaa. The geo-exhibition features rock samples and a timeline dating back 13 000 years. There are also several maps showing local geology.

### 24. IMATRA, IMATRANKOSKI RAPIDS

Imatrankoski rapids was formed about 5,700 years ago, when flowing waters of River Vuoksi eroded a channel into the fractured bedrock. It is said to be Finland's first tourist attraction, attracting visitors also from abroad. Nowadays the rapids are dammed, but the flowing waters can be admired at summer in rapids shows.

### 25. IMATRA, VALTIONHOTELLI (STATE HOTEL)

Imatra Valtionhotelli (State Hotel) is a unique attraction and hotel in the national landscape of Imatrankoski rapids. The Art Nouveau hotel, voted the most beautiful building in Finland, was built in 1903 and designed by Usko Nyström. Valtionhotelli hides historical and mystical stories that can be sensed from the moment you step inside.

### 26. LAPPEENRANTA, SAIMAA CANAL

The Saimaa Canal is a historically significant waterway that was built to connect lake Saimaa and the Gulf of Finland, Baltic Sea. Completed in 1856 and the canal is 42.9 kilometres long. In Lappeenranta, where the canal has been excavated through the First Salpausselkä formation, you can explore it on a cultural trail along the canal.

### 27. LAPPEENRANTA, FORTRESS & HARBOR

Located right in the centre of Lappeenranta, Lappeenranta Fortress combines both culture and geology. Today, the fortress offers visitors a broad overview of its history and a wide range of events. The fortress is also a popular tourist destination

### 28. LAPPEENRANTA, TUJU TAPROOM

Tuju Taproom, Pizzeria & Shop is located in the beautiful Rakuunamäki area of Lappeenranta. Tuju focuses on quality craft beers and ciders as well as non-alcoholic brewery products. Tuju offers Neapolitan-style sourdough pizzas with an emphasis on local flavours.

### 29. LAPPEENRANTA, RAKUUNAMÄKI

Rakuunamäki is the best-preserved barracks area in Europe, purpose-built for the cavalry. The Lappeenranta Lakeside route (Rantaraitti) runs along the shore of Rakuunamäki.

### 30. LAPPEENRANTA, HOTEL RAKUUNA

The cosy hotel is located in the centre of Lappeenranta, on the historic Rakuunamäki hill, close to the city services and the magnificent lake scenery.



Image: Valtionhotelli (state hotel) Veera Hakkarainen



# OTHER SITES IN GEOPARKS?

See also the other sites and services of Salpausselkä and Saimaa Geoparks! You will find many different destinations, restaurants and activity options on the website!

[www.saimaageopark.fi/en](http://www.saimaageopark.fi/en)  
[www.salpausselkageopark.fi/en](http://www.salpausselkageopark.fi/en)

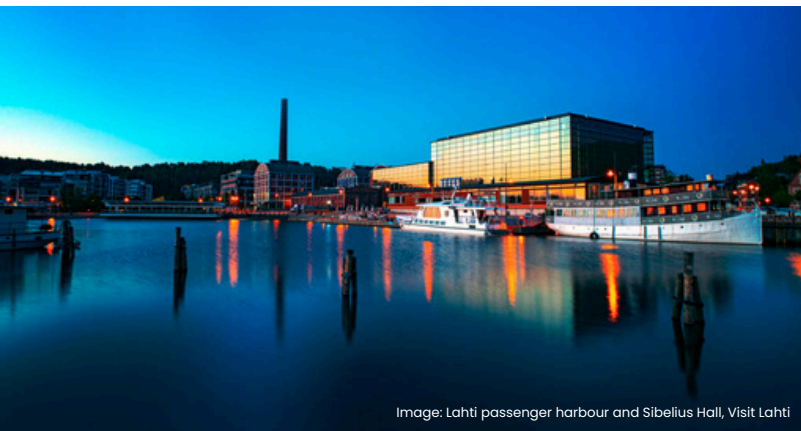


Image: Lahti passenger harbour and Sibelius Hall, Visit Lahti



Image: Viewing tower by Lake Pajanne in Padasjoki in Salpausselkä Geopark, Tea Karvinen



Image: Neitvuori, Arto Härmäläinen