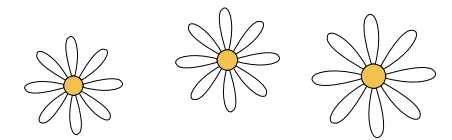


# Around Saimaa Lake



cycling in Southern Karelia and Southern Savo with the vistas of Finland's biggest lake. Fitness and Culture!

Imatra - Simpele - Parikkala - Punkaharju - Kerimäki - Savonlinna - Sulkava - Puumala - Ristiina - Suomenniemi - Savitaipale - Taipalsaari - Lappeenranta - Joutseno - Imatra

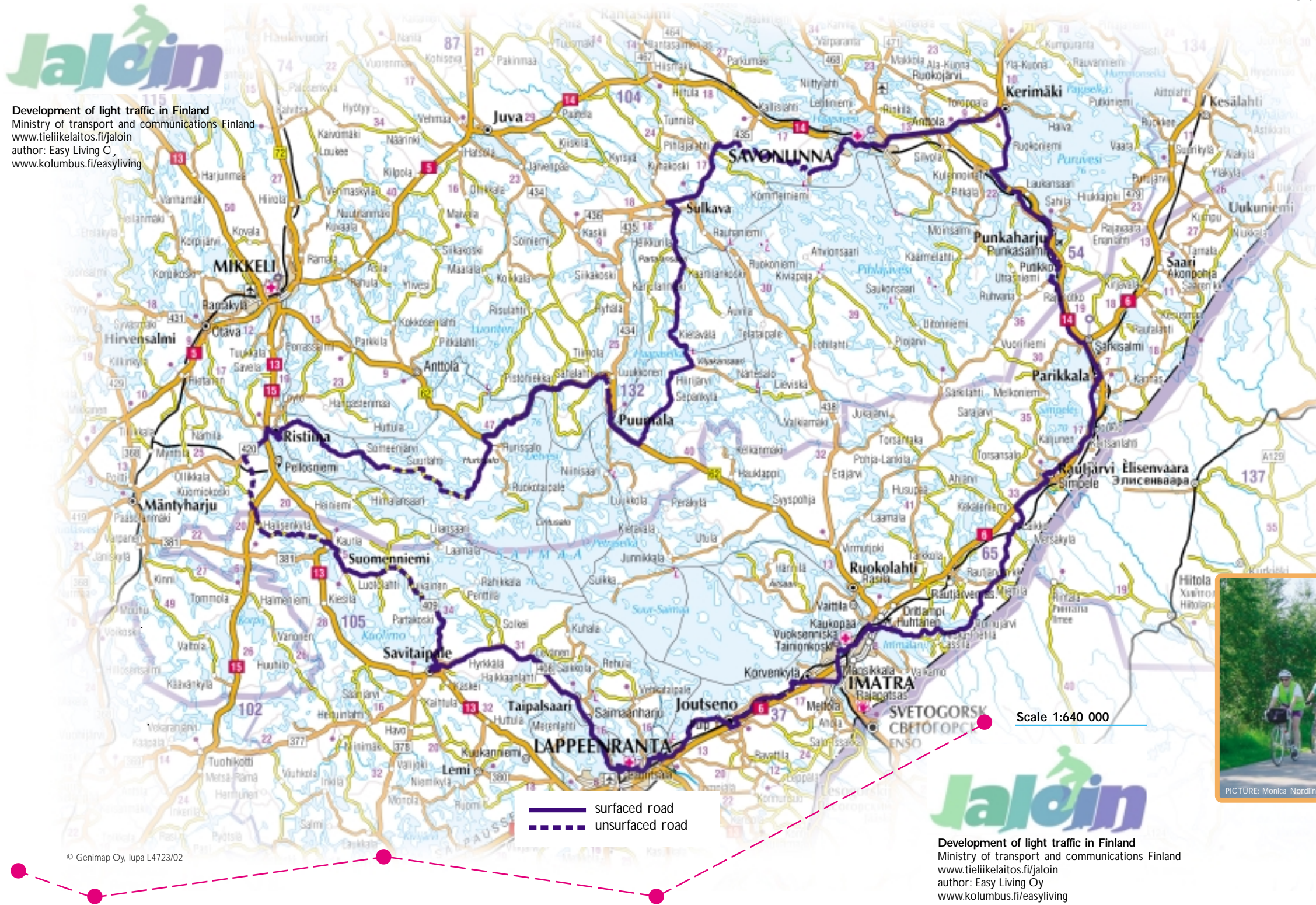
On this route you will be cycling through lake, shore and forest scenery as well as lively village and city landscapes. The Saimaa region is one of Finland's most attractive tourist destinations, and its strengths are apparent on this trip. This route suggestion offers a lot of beautiful landscapes, several cultural attractions and accommodation of all levels and prices. The most famous sights are Imatra Rapids, Punkaharju Ridge, the Retretti Art Centre, Kerimäki Church, Olavinlinna Castle, Saimaa Canal and Lappeenranta Fortress. In addition to the bigger sights, the route includes several smaller, interesting attractions and a lot of sights of natural beauty. The beautiful lake scenery, pleasant country roads and partly hilly terrain are characteristic of this route.



PICTURE: Monica Nordling



Development of light traffic in Finland  
Ministry of transport and communications Finland  
[www.tieliikelaitos.fi/jaloin](http://www.tieliikelaitos.fi/jaloin)  
author: Easy Living C,  
[www.kolumbus.fi/easyliving](http://www.kolumbus.fi/easyliving)



© Genimap Oy, lupa L4723/02



Development of light traffic in Finland  
Ministry of transport and communications Finland  
[www.tieliikelaitos.fi/jaloin](http://www.tieliikelaitos.fi/jaloin)  
author: Easy Living Oy  
[www.kolumbus.fi/easyliving](http://www.kolumbus.fi/easyliving)

The length of the route: 462 km.

**Level of Difficulty:** The route is suitable for people of average fitness and for those with some cycling experience, as the daily distances can be kept moderate. You can also choose only parts of the route. It is also suitable for families whose children are used to cycling. The terrain has both flat and hilly sections; in certain parts the terrain is very hilly particularly between Savonlinna, Sulkava, Puumala and Ristiina. Cycle calmly, take time and look around.

**Roads:** The route mainly follows paved roads. Cycling lanes can be found near built-up areas; the rest of the cycling is along the roads. However, the aim has been to find quiet roads. Since some of the roads on the route are fairly narrow, the cyclist has to be careful, particularly in bends and hills. Around 70 km of gravel road in total.

**Map Recommendation:** Fillari GT 4 (1:200 000 Karttakeskus). The route mainly follows national cycling routes, which have been marked by signposts with a brown background. (Some sections might not have signs.)

**Bus connections:** Matkahuolto bus stations can be found along the route in Imatra (central station), Savonlinna and Lappeenranta. There is almost always room for one bicycle on a bus; however, if you are transporting more than one bike, it is best to contact the route operator in advance. The price depends on the operator (the recommendation is the lowest single fair 2.30 in 2003).

**Train connections:** Imatra central station can be reached from Helsinki by express or IC-trains (book a bike slot in advance, price 9 • in 2003). Other stations along the route are in Simpele, Parikkala, Punkaharju, Lusto, Retretti, Savonlinna Market Place, Savonlinna, Lappeenranta and Joutseno. For more information: [www.vr.fi](http://www.vr.fi)



PICTURE: Monica Nordling

PICTURE: Comma Pictures

## Imatra - Simpele 52 km

*Lively Imatra, historical museum road, country scenery*

The trip starts from Imatra central station. Cycle over Vuoksi river on the bridge which goes under the railway line. Turn left from the roundabout towards Vuoksenniska. On the right is **Pyhä Nikolaos Orthodox Church**: on the left is **Imatra City Museum of Cultural History** housed within Neitsytmiemi Manor (1900), which has Finland's Tourism Museum's changing exhibitions. At 5.0 km in Vuoksenniska centre shops, pharmacist, banks etc. are available. Continue along the cycling lane through Vuoksenniska.

At 7.4 km on the right is Alvar Aalto's sculptural **Church of the Three Crosses in Vuoksenniska** (1957–58). Cycle over the motorway and continue along Niska-Pietilä Road to the left, Road 3981. The old residential surroundings turn into beautiful country scenery. The Museum Road begins at ca. 13 km, signpost on the right.The Niska-Pietilä Road's history dates to the 17th century.20 km of winding Museum Road ahead. Some residential areas here and there, forest and country landscapes. At ca. 18.5 km is Niska-Pietilä. Small hills to start with, after ca. 22 km hillier. **Kikka's Komotti craft shop** is on the left at 23.6 km.The country scenery continues. At 26 km on the right is Hiidenjärvi beach. Miettilä village is at ca. 32 km on the right; the Museum Road finishes here. Turn right towards Joensuu 175 at 32.6 km, Road 3991

A village shop is on the right at 33.5 km. Winding, pleasant country road continues. Turn right at Trunk Road 6 junction after cycling for ca. 46 km. Cycle carefully along the trunk road for ca. 6.5 km, until the route turns left to Simpele. Turn right soon after the crossing. Simpele centre is at ca. 54 km. Shops and other services are available in the centre. In Simpele centre **Simmes** Oy offers rooms.

## -----

### Simpele – Parikkala 18 km

*Close to the Russian border, unique Statue Park*

Ride from Simpele along Road 4051 towards Parikkala.At ca. 5.5 km from Simpele centre you come to Road 6; turn left. The highly recommended **Statue Park** is on the right at 9.0 km. At ca. 10 km on the left is hotel/restaurant **Laatokan portti**. Turn right soon after that following the national route 6 to Parikkala. If you continue straight along Road 6 Hotel-Restaurant **Kägöne** will be on your left at 15.5 km. In Parikkala accommodation is also available in **Lehtola bothy and cottage accommodation** and **Ristimäki Manor** bed and breakfast.

## -----

### Parikkala – Punkaharju 35 km

*Lakes and national landscapes, magnificent Punkaharju*

The route continues from Parikkala Railway Station to the left towards Road 6. The cycling lane follows the beautiful Simpele Lake shores. At 1.7 km you come to Road 6; turn left towards Joensuu, cycling lane on the left of the road. In Särkisalmi turn left onto Road 4052. **Hotel Lohikontti** at the crossing.At 6.5 km turn right to Myllysuluntie (gravel road), which runs on the left of the railway.At 10 km turn right across the railway and left when you come to Road 14. Cycle carefully at the right shoulder; turn left when you have cycled for 15.7 km towards Särkilähti, Road 4063. Slightly further up the road is **Kultakivi Campsite**.At 17.1 km turn right to Vanha Viipurintie, gravel road. Pine forest, ridges, lakes. **Putikko Manor** offers accommodation. **Putikko village milieu** at 21.4 km.The **Clay Smith** Hannu Sairanen's workshop is on the left.

At 22.5 km is a junction; take the road to the left (straight ahead). Magnificent lake scenery at 26.3 km when you come to Punkaharju. **Guesthouse** on the right. Beautiful lake scenery continues on the right at 27.3 km. Doctors, pharmacy and a shop in the centre. At 28.3 km turn left towards Savonlinna at the junction of Road 14. Cycling lane on the right. Impressive lake scenery before turning to the ridges at 30 km. On the left is **Punkaharju**, Road 4792. Punkaharju nature reserve areas and national landscape became the protected Kruununpuisto Park as early as 1844; it is one of Finland's oldest tourist sights. The Forest Museum **Lusto** and **Punkaharju Old Station** are on the right at 35.6 km. Finland's oldest hotel still in use, **Valtionhotelli**, is on the left at 35.9 km. By the junction is the "Forest is Finland's Support" plantation.Turn to the left towards Retretti along the left side of the railway before the main road. (Tuunaansalmi). On the left is Pihlajavesi Lake, on the right Puruvesi Lake. At 1.4 km from Valtionhotelli are the **Retretti** Art Centre, Punkaharju **Holiday Centre** and Water Park **Kesämaa** (Summerland).

## -----

### Punkaharju – Kerimäki – Savonlinna 40 km

The route continues from Retretti. Turn left to Road 14.You have to cycle for ca. 4 km along the main road, no cycling lane. Turn right onto Road 4794 towards Kerimäki 12, Ruokolahdentie. (If you do not want to cycle along the main road, you can continue from Retretti along Tuunaansarentie, gravel road, and along Tuunaansaari - Majasaari Road and Majasaarentie.) At 10 km on the left is **Korkeamäki** accommodation. At 10.3 km on the right is a summer café. The landscape is beautiful country scenery, no tough hills. Turn right at 15.4 km towards Kerimäki. At 16.6 km is **Kerimäki Church**, the world's largest wooden church, which accommodates for 5000 people including those standing up. **Finland's Lake Fishing Museum, Fisherman's Estate and the Museum of Local Culture and History** are in Kerimäki centre. The trip continues from the roundabout towards Savonlinna. There are shops, banks and kiosks in Kerimäki. At 18.1 km head towards Savonlinna 22 and turn directly to the left towards Savonlinna 22, Road 71, Anttolantie. A bigger road, more traffic, cycle carefully. At 24.8 km **Kerimaa** on the left. At 27.2 km turn to Savonlinna 14 on the right, Road 14. Main road, no cycling lane, cycle very carefully. The cycling lane starts on the right at 32 km.You come to the bridge leading to Savonlinna, when you have cycled for 38.2 km. **Olavinlinna** Castle, dating to 1475, shows up impressively on the left. At 39 km the road turns to the right to **Spa Casino,Vuorilinna**. If you are continuing the journey, cycle up the hill. On the top of the hill is **Hotel Pietari Kylliäinen**. From the junction at 39.3 km continue straight ahead if

you want to get to Olavinlinna. At 39.6 km turn left towards Olavinlinna. At 39.8 km turn left to Linnankatu. At 40 km on Linnankatu is **Hotel Hospitz**. By Savonlinnan Market is **Hotel Seurahuone**. Savonlinna, famous for its annual Opera Festival, offers a lot to see and experience. Visit the Market Place to sense the summer atmosphere and enjoy the delicacies of Savo. A ferry trip offers a nice alternative to cycling.

## -----

### Savonlinna – Sulkava 43 km

*Lively Savonlinna, famous Olavinlinna Castle, the Sulkava renowned for its rowing*

Continue the trip towards Mikkeli. At 2 km from the centre on the left is **the summer hotel Malakias**. At 3.2 km turn left towards Kesamonsaari, Pihlajaniemi. **Laitaatsilta War Memorial**. At 4.6 km is splendid lake scenery on both sides. At 5.4 km turn right from the crossing; there is a shop and a post office by the crossing.

Small hills to start with, country scenery, fields, houses, later forested with less houses. At 12.2 km turn right to Koivukannantie. In addition to the map, follow the signs for the national route; this section is full of small winding forest roads with a couple of vicious hills; turn right at a crossing at 14.1 km (not onto Suvikankaantie). At 16.1 km turn left onto Naistenlahdentie. When you have cycled for ca. 25 km, turn right onto Road 435.

Pihlajalahti stone bridge is at 27.5 km on the right, a kiosk and Pihlajalahti village market. At 4 km on the right is **farm accommodation Höök**. The terrain is hilly at times; the hills are long and gentle, country and forest scenery.You can turn to Sulkava at Imatra-Lohilähti junction or continue straight and at 41 km turn left onto Road 4351 towards Sulkava. Sulkava at ca. 43 km. **Motel and Restaurant Muikkukukko** on the right from the centre along the lakeside street. Accommodation available also in **Vilkaharju Campsite** and **Sulkava Holiday Centre**: they are situated in beautiful ridge scenery along Road 438. Sulkava is best known for its rowing tradition, but its beauty attracts other passers-by too.

## -----

### Sulkava - Puumala 48 km

*Lakes and hills, beautiful*

Ride from the centre towards Puumala; turn left at the top of the hill towards Kietävälä, Partalansaari, at 0.4 km. Hilly terrain, beautiful country and lake scenery; the terrain is fairly tough. At ca. 3 km on the right is **Linnavuori**, one of Finland's most valuable ancient castles. Hakovirta, splendid scenery. At 23.5 km **Kietävälänvirta Ferry**, magnificent lake scenery. After the ferry, cycle through Vijäkansaari towards Puumala. At 26 km turn right towards Puumala 22. The terrain is very hilly with beautiful lake scenery. **Rock Paintings** at 35.5 km. At 42 km turn right towards Mikkeli 78, Road 62. You have to cycle a short distance along Road 62. Puumala's impressive bridge, Saimaa Bridge, at 48.4 km. Its speciality is that you can take the lift down to the lakeside (a signposted route for cyclists!). Puumala centre appears on the left at 48.2 km. Shops, a bank etc. in Puumala. Puumala is an active summer town; a pleasant place to take a break in one of the lakeside cafés.

Cycle from Puumala along the route on the west side of Road 62 towards Sahanlahti. Cycle past the church, and continue to the left along the Old Puumalantie. **Koskenselkä, cottages, accommodation, campsite** turns to the left at 2 km from Puumala Centre. At 3.5 km from the centre turn to left on to a gravel road, Lampilantie. At 7 km you arrive at **Sahanlahti Leisure Centre**, high quality accommodation.

## -----

### Puumala (Sahanlahti) – Ristiina 78 km

*More lakes and hills, Lietvesi*

Hilly terrain; beautiful country and lake scenery continues. Pistohiekka at 8.4 km, magnificent beaches. At 9.7 km a beautiful spot on the road where the road runs along an isthmus, a lake on both sides. At 12 km **Lietvesi**, Lietvesi bridge, beautiful scenery. At the Lietvesi resting place and viewpoint you can see over the beautiful Saimaa Lake; the view is well worth stopping for. By the resting place is also a kiosk. Turn left to Hurissalo 2 at 22.8 km. (At 31.5 km from Puumala centre.) Turn right to Road 4323 towards Ristiina 43. The road is initially paved; paving finishes at 41.5 km. The gravel road section is mainly forested country scenery, a lake here and there; the road is winding and hilly, and, thus, quite tough. Lofty hills on the right at 43.5 km. Gravel Road for 16 km. At 58.5 km on the left are **Astuvansalmi Rock Paintings**: a 2.5-km nature path leads to the paintings. At 59 km on the right is **Pien-Toijola Peasant Museum**. At 60 km is **Kallioniemi Café-Restaurant**. 1 km to the left is the shore. Go and admire the boats floating past. Ristiina at 78 km. **Brahenlinna** ruins and services, shops, beach etc. are on offer in Ristiina.

## -----

### Ristiina – Mikkeli 34 km

### Puumala – Mikkeli 64 km

If you want to ride from Puumala directly to Mikkeli, cycle from Puumala along Road 62. The distance is 64 km. The road is beautiful, but busy, hardly any shoulder, so cycle particularly carefully on this route. From Ristiina to Mikkeli you can cycle along Taavelintie, Road 4321. 10 km of gravel road

## -----

### Ristiina – Savitaipale 65 km

*Forest and country scenery, lakes, pleasant roads*

The caption starts from the junction of Road 13. Cycle from Ristiina along Road 13 for ca. 1 km to the left (cycling lane) and turn right towards Mäntyharju, Road 420.Yövedentie is to

the left at 6 km (sign 13 on the national route) Narrow forested gravel road. Turn left at the junction at 12 km, slightly wider gravel road. Forest and country scenery typical for Savo. Slightly hilly. At 14.6 km the route continues along Honkataipaleentie directly across Road 15. Turn right at a crossing at 15.3 km, a small lake on the left and quite a hill ahead of you (the cycling route sign will guide you). The road is a narrow gravel road; however, it was chosen in order to avoid the busy main roads. Pleasant country scenery, houses and small lakes here and there. Turn left at a crossing at 16.5 km, slightly wider gravel road ahead. Hills, forest, houses, and lakes here and there. At 21 km is a dangerous downhill; it is best to wheel your bike. From 22 km on, the road runs alongside a lake for 2 km; the lake is on the right until you come to Road 13 at ca. 30 km. Cycle for 100 m towards Mikkeli, and turn right onto Välitie. Paved road. Suomensniemi is at 35 km; a shop and a church.The trip continues to the left towards Savitaipale, Road 409.

After a village shop at 40.3 km the road becomes gravel road, Road 409. On the left at 42.6 km is **Suomijärvi campsite and cottages**. Beautiful scenery,lakes, lush nature, hills. Paving starts when you have cycled for ca. 54 km. Just after that is a beautiful spot where you find **Restaurant Koskikievari**, which also offers accommodation. Rest for a moment and enjoy the beautiful nature. 100 m further up the road is a shop and a bar. At 56 km is **Kärnäkoski fortress** on the left. Lush nature, lakes and forest. Holiday Centre **Karhurinteen loma** is on the right at 63 km. Cycle through Savitaipale centre, where there are a **church, Museum of Local Culture and History** and services.

## -----

### Savitaipale – Lappeenranta 40 km

*The fortress city of Lappeenranta*

Continue the trip along Road 408 towards Taipalesaari. Varying, beautiful country scenery. Suur-Saimaa holiday village is on the left; the route continues straight. At 17 km is Levänen, a beautiful spot on the embankment road with the lake on both sides. Taipalsaari is at 26 km. Cycling lane runs from Taipalsaari to Lappeenrantaan. Many of Lappeenranta's sights can be found near the **fortress**. The fortress is an old town founded in a trading post in 1649. Southern Karelia's provincial centre, Lappeenranta is an established inland port.

## -----

### Lappeenranta – Imatra 43 km

*Saimaa Canal, Imatra Rapids*

Cycle from Lappeenranta towards Lauritsala. At 8 km are **Mälkiä Canal and Canal Museum**. At 11 km turn left towards Ilottula. Turn right under Road 6 towards Honkalahti when you have cycled 20.8 km. On the left is Travel Centre Annukka; turn left after it. In Joutseno centre you will find shops etc. Cycle past the right side of the water tower, and turn left by the church onto Road 3951. **Pitäjäntupamuseo (Cottage Museum)**. At 24.5 km turn left under Road 6 and the railway to Karsturanta 2. At 24.7 km turn right to Karsturanta 2 (follow the national route). At 29 km on the left is a beach. At 31.7 km turn left onto Veromalamenttie before the railway and Road 6. It is a small gravel road, but this way you avoid the busy and narrow Road 6. At 33.8 km turn right at the junction, short distance on a forest lorry road. At 34 km turn right and straight after turn left on to a paved road. At 35.3 km turn right. Left from the crossing is **Hotel Joutsenranta**. At 37 km turn left towards Rauha, then right towards Imatra 5. At 39 km on the right is Hotel-restaurant **Kulkuripoika** and on the left is **Karjalan Portti**. Cycle to Imatra Rapids along Road 397. **Valtionhotelli** in Jugendstil and Finland's oldest tourist attraction **Imatra Rapids** are in the centre. You can cycle to the Central station along the left side of Vuoksi; the distance is 3 km.

## Travel Information

**Imatran Seudun Kehitysyhtiö Oy,Travel Services**, tel. +358-5-681 2500 http://travel.imatra.fi

**Rautjärvi/Travel Services (Imatra)**, tel. +358-5-681 2500 www.rautjarvi.fi

**Parikkala Municipality**, tel. +358-5-68611 www.parikkala.fi

**Punkaharju Travel Office and Travel Agent, Xenia Tours**, tel. +358-15-734 1233, www.punkaharju.fi

**Kerimäki Travel Information**, tel. +358-15-575 4211, www.kerimaki.fi, www.puruvesi.fi

**Savonlinna Travel Services**, tel. +358-15-517 510 www.savonlinnatravel.com, www.savonlinna.fi

**Sulkava Travel Information**, tel. +358-15-7391 236 (15.6. – 25.8.), +358-15-73911 www.sulkava.fi

**Suomensniemi Municipality**, tel. +358-15-735 7700, www.suomensniemi.fi

**Savitaipale**, tel. +358-5-614 011, www.savitaipale.fi

**Taipalsaari Travel Information**, tel. +358-5-63 591 www.taipalsaari.fi

**Joutseno Municipality**, tel. +358-5-632 611 www.joutseno.fi

Travel Centre Annukka, tel. +358-5-4133 651

**Lappeenranta, Travel Information**, tel. +358-5-667 788, www.lappeenranta.fi

**Mikkelin Seudun Matkailupalvelu ry, Travel Information**, tel. +358-15-194 3900, www.travel.fi/mikkeli, www.mikkeli.fi

**Ristiina** www.ristiina.fi



Picture: Monica Nordling

## Accommodation

**Imatra**
Summer Hotel Mansikkala, tel. +358-50-307 0139
Quality Hotel Vuoksenhovi, tel. +358-5-687 8000
Park Hotel Imatra, tel. +358-5-473 4300
Cumulus Imatra, tel. +358-5-476 3555
Scandic Hotel Imatran Valtionhotelli, tel. +358-5-68 881
Vuoksen Kalastuspuisto Campsite +358-5-432 3123
Imatra Spa, tel. +358-5-68251
Hotel-Restaurant Rantahovi, tel. +358-5-473 4944
Ukonlinna Hostel, tel. +358-5-432 1270

**Joutseno**
Hotel Joutsenranta, tel. +358-5-680 5500
Majatalo Karjalan Portti (Guest House), tel. +358-5-432 8880
Gasthaus Joutseno, tel. +358-5-4132 327
Hotel-Restaurant Kulkuripoika, tel. +358-5-4328 322

**Rautjärvi/Simpele**
Simmes Oy, +358-5-477 2740 tai +358-400-844 702

**Parikkala**
Ristimäki Manor, tel. +358-5-430 053
Lehtola bothy and cottage accommodation, tel. +358-5-430 216
Hotel Lohikontti, tel. +358-5-483 201
Laatokan portti, tel. +358-5-449 282

**Punkaharju**
Kultakivi holiday centre, campsite, cottages and holiday apartments, tel. +358-15-645 151
Putikko Manor, tel. +358-15-645 322
Gasthaus Punkaharju, tel. +358-15-441 371
Punkaharju Valtionhotelli, tel. +358-15-739 611
Punkaharju Holiday Centre and Camping, cottages and apartments, tel. +358-15-739 611
Punkaharjun Kuntoutuskeskus, tel. +358-15-775 091
Maatlamatkalu Mannila (farm), tel. +358-15-644 265

**Kerimäki**
Korkeamaan Majatalo (Guest House) +358-15-442 186, +358-50- 521 817
Ollija Holiday farm, +358-15-544 864
Hotel Herttua, tel. +358-15-769 900
Hotellikylä Kerimaa, tel. +358-15-555 0200

**Savonlinna**
Hotel Pietari Kylliäinen, tel. +358-15-739 5500
Kartanon Kievari, tel. +358-15-522 200
Spa Hotelli Casino ja Summer Hotel Vuorilinna, tel. +358-15-73950
Family Hotel Hospitz, tel. +358-15-515 661
Savonlinna Camping Vuohimäki, tel. +358-15-537 353
Savonlinnan Seurahuone, tel. +358-15-5731
Summer Hotel Tott, tel. +358-15-575 6390
Wanha Pappila, tel. +358-15-572 910
Hook Farm Accommodation, tel. +358-15-640 407

**Sulkava**
Motel Muikkukukko, tel. +358-15-471 651
Sulkavan holiday centre ja Vilkaharju campsite, tel. +358-15-471 761, in the winter +358-9-6138 3210
Uunon Hovi, tel. +358-15-471 508
Partalansaari B/B, tel. +358-15-478 850
Wellplace, tel. +358-15-471 444

**Suomensniemi**
Suomijärvi campsite, tel. +358-40-769 5627, +358-15-669 486

**Savitaipale**
Karhurinteen loma, tel. +358-5-4160 144
Olkkolan Hovi, tel. +358-5-612 7700

**Taipalsaari**
Asko and Malja's farm accommodation, tel. +358-5-454 4606
Saimaan Paula, tel. +358-5-414 5160
Holiday Centre Saimaanranta, tel. +358-5-414 5002
Suur-Saimaa Holiday Centre, tel. +358-5-414 5081

**Lappeenranta**
Hotel Saimaa, tel. +358-5-4152 800
Scandic Hotel Patria, tel. +358-5-677 511
Hotel Cumulus, tel. +358-5-677 811
Sokos Hotel Lappee, tel. +358-5-678 61
Kyyppälaitos/Lappeenranta Spa, tel. +358-5-616 7201
Finnhostel Lappeenranta, tel. +358-5-4515 555
Holiday and Conference Hotel Marjola, tel. +358-5-452 4160
Puistohotelli Karelia Park, tel. +358-5-453 0405
Huhtiniemi campsite, tel. +358-5-453 1888