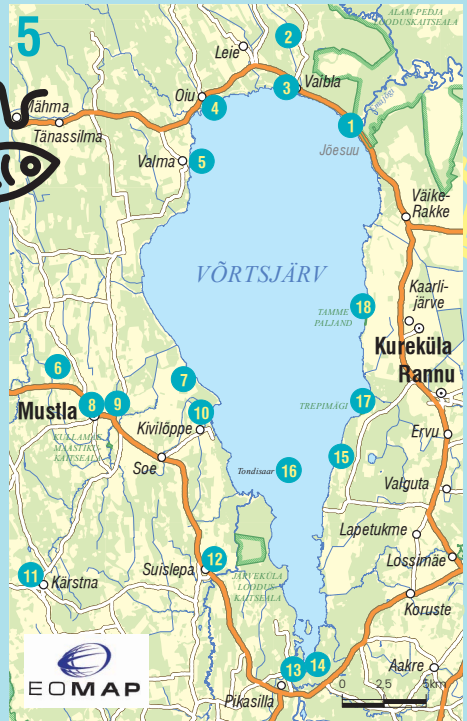



Lake Võrtsjärv

The mysterious and majestic Võrtsjärv is the largest domestic body of water in Estonia (area 270km²) which, in fact, functions as a enormous eel farm. Glass eels, after being carried by Atlantic ocean currents from the Sargasso Sea and all the way to England's coast, have made a long flight to Estonia and live now in Lake Võrtsjärv. Võrtsjärv is supplied with water by 18 rivers. Connection between the Lake Peipus and large rivers in Russia ensure that Võrtsjärv has a rich fish population – over 30 fish species have been identified in total. The lake is also an important migration route for birds and consequently a good place for birdwatching. For preserving the lake's nature, Võrtsjärve Reserve has been established and included in the Natura 2000 network. The reserve contains flood meadows along the lake and artificial wetlands – polders.

1. The point of junction of River Emajõgi and Võrtsjärv could very well be the place that every Estonian knows from a nursery rhyme where a ragtag group of a bast shoe, a bladder and a piece of straw (of all things) travelled from Tartu and Viljandi and had trouble crossing the river.

Emajõgi can certainly be crossed here but you can also stop for a moment, have a picnic or simply enjoy the beautiful view of Lake Võrtsjärv. The **Lake Võrtsjärv Visitor Centre** is located in the Rannu-Jõesuu recreation area and built of green building materials (wood, wood chips, clay, straw). Here you can get information about recreation and accommodation the Võrtsjärv area, book sailing boat trips on Võrtsjärv, participate in various workshops and buy souvenirs made by local craftsmen. A 15-metre-high observation tower and a bathing place are located near the visitor centre. A 140 km long marked bike trail circles all the way around Võrtsjärv.





2. When you drive to Viljandi, there is a sign to the right: Meleski 3 km. Meleski Glass Factory, built in 1792, was the second largest glass manufacturing company in the Russian Empire and the largest in the Baltic countries. Mirrors from Meleski were even used in the Tsar's palace.

Ville Dreving's small museum-collection now includes over 1000 examples of locally manufactured glass products and items related to the factory. The museum is open for visitors by prior arrangement. Tel +372 5648 9406

3. **Vaibla** is an excellent place for a beach stop in summer, to bathe in the lake or just take a look at Võrtsjärv.


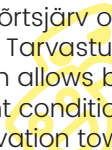

4. **Oiu** is an old fishing village, first mentioned in 1599 and known for the well-preserved former Oiu Dairy. The historic harbour site has been reconstructed and has a lovely view of Tännassilma River and Oiu flood meadow. Oiu Harbour provides opportunities for canoe trips and boat renting by prior arrangement. There is also a hiking trail in the vicinity. www.oiusadam.ee | Tel +372 5349 2707

5. **Valma village** (Walmabe) has been mentioned as early as 1584. A stone age settlement has been identified (the third millennium BC), its graves revealing the oldest anthropological material about people in the Võrtsjärv area. Valma Harbour is one of the largest by the lake; it is dredged, has the necessary auxiliary buildings and specializes as fishing harbour. Sailing boat trips to the lake begin from the harbour. The local traditional fishing boat is called kaleboat after a large-holed fishing net (kale) that was dragged along the lake bottom. There is also a beach near Valma. The local tourist information is located in a cosy timber house in Valma village – it provides information services about the lake and its vicinity. You can visit the Fisherman's Room to learn more about life and traditions in the old fishing village and the pavilion for exhibiting old fishing boats and fishing equipment.

Valma Adventure Park is open by prior arrangement. You can climb on a climbing wall and obstacle courses, explore the area from a 24 m high tower and zip down 1,5 km between the sky and the ground. www.valma.ee | Tel +372 50 36 906


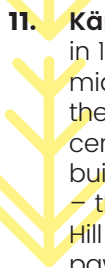
6. The health trails and ritual sites at **Lusika Farm** are open to visitors with an advance notice. lusikatalu.pri.ee | Tel +372 505 2697

7. **Tarvastu polder** is a polder embankment with some decades old meadows and canals on one side and Lake Võrtsjärv on the other side. There is a harbour canal at the mouth of Tarvastu River in the southeastern part of the recreation area which allows boats and other smaller vessels to moor and provides excellent conditions for sailing sports. The recreation area has also an observation tower.

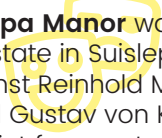


8. An Estonian flag is now flying at a height of 28 metres from the tip of the chimney of the one-time **Mustla Dairy**, presently **Mulgi Majakas**, which is the third tallest Estonian flag flying in Estonia, behind only Pikk Herman and the observation tower on Suur Munamägi. Located in the middle of the settlement is a fun **fountain in the shape of Lake Võrtsjärv**.
9. One of the most important sights in **Tarvastu** is undoubtedly **St. Peter's Church**. The older parts of the current church probably date from the 14th century. The old church consisted of a square nave and a chancel; alcoves typical of medieval altars are visible in the east wall of the chancel and in the northeast corner of the nave. After suffering damage in wars, the church was reconstructed in 1771 under the direction of master builder Johann Christoph Knaut. The church caught fire after a lightning strike in 1892; reconstruction begun in 1893 and the restored church was consecrated in December the same year. The designer and builder was Gustav Heinrich Beermann, a schoolteacher from Põltsamaa. The altar painting "Calvary" – Theodor Thieme, 1859. The organ – August Terkmann. Across the road from the church, by Tarvastu Reservoir, you can see the **wooden sculpture group "Happy Mulgi Family"**. **Tarvastu Manor** was in its day well known for producing spirits that was even transported to Riga with horse-drawn wagons in winter. The main building of the manor has been destroyed, the old auxiliary buildings, meanwhile, are among the largest in Estonia. The sizable granary, completed in 1842, is best preserved; it was used to store both grain and vodka and the roof is still adorned with a lopsided weather vane with the Baron's initials and the year 1842. When the manor was divided after 1920, the last manor lord Karl von Mensenkampff allegedly received a farm plot right in the manor centre and continued to live in Tarvastu up to the beginning of the war. **Tarvastu Forest Park** includes **the ruins of the local Ordensburg** and the **burial chapel** of the Mensenkampff family. The famous Tarvastu Hanging Bridge, allegedly used by the lady of the manor to get to the family tomb more easily, was gifted to Viljandi town by the manor owner in 1931.
10. There are two protected **large glacial erratics** near **Kivilõppe**: according to the legend, one was thrown there from Tarturanna by the mythical hero Kalevipoeg and other by his enemy Vanapagan (Old Nick). The Kalevipoeg stone is 3 m high, with a diameter of 15,8 m. The Võrtsjärv Fish Protection Station and two mooring sites are located in Kivilõppe. Kivilõppe harbour is managed by the Estonian Environmental Inspectorate and can receive larger vessels; the municipal Ivanov Canal is used by amateur fishermen and yacht owners.







11. Kärstna, formerly a part of Helme Manor, became a separate estate in 1678. The main building is not dated but it probably dates from the mid-18th century, judging from its style. The current appearance of the **Kärstna manor centre** originates from the beginning of the 20th century. An oak avenue begins on the western side in front of the main building, leading to one of the finest classicist works of art in Estonia – the **memorial of General Reinhold von Anrep** on Kärstna Chapel Hill – a cast-iron lion on a huge rock, its maned head resting on its paws (sculpted by the German sculptor Christian Daniel Rauch). It was commissioned in 1844 by Lieutenant General Joseph von Anrep in memory of his father, a lieutenant general in the Battle of Austerlitz who had died in action in 1807.
Tel +372 526 2901






12. Uue-Suislepa Manor was established after Tsar Paul I of Russia divided the state estate in Suislepa into two parts. The larger part was granted to Count Ernst Reinhold Mengeden, a favourite of the Tsar's, and later went to Karl Gustav von Krüdener. The beginning of the 19th century was the high point for construction of the manor centre. The fruit garden of the manor became famous for the apple variety 'Suislepp'. A memorial stone marks the place where the original tree of the variety once grew. The main building now functions as a school. Urka memorial stone, commemorating the Great Famine in Suislepa in 1695-1697, is located near the school.
www.suislepa.ee | Tel +372 525 4160



13. Pikasilla is an old road junction, river crossing and inn site. In olden days, the Väike-Emajõgi River was crossed on a ferry. The settlement and the bridge were destroyed in the WWII. Bloody battles raged in September 1944 between German troops fortified in the area and the attacking Red Army. There is a collective grave and a monument by the road. Pikasilla pine grove has a great landscape value – both for the actual tree stand and for beautiful views of Väike-Emajõgi River and Vooremägi Hill. The local people call the spot Pikasilla Grove and one forest ride is called the Avenue of Sighs. It was even the planned spot for a health resort during the first independence period of Estonia.



14. Vooremägi Hill. The old hillfort by Lake Võrtsjärv was used in the second millennium. The moraine hill is 10-11 m high, 44 m long and 34 m wide. The location of the fort had great strategic importance and the area was densely populated. Legends tell of secret passages and cellars inside Vooremägi Hill.



15. The Lake Museum is located at the Centre for Limnology in Vehendi village in the east gate to Lake Võrtsjärv. The Lake Museum is currently

building its exhibition on water biota. The complex of the Lake Museum also includes a conference room for lectures and seminars, a cafe for visitors and a tourist information centre.

kalala.emu.ee/kalala | Tel +372 522 9570

- 16. Tondisaar.** The islet, smaller than half a hectare, rises a couple of metres above the surface of Lake Võrtsjärv. The islet could be a residue of a larger terrain feature and is surrounded by a reed-covered bank and several stone heaps. Tondisaar (Ghost Island in English) has served as a shelter for those seeking solitude. There is a recreation area with a campfire site and a place for grilling. Sailing boat trips to Tondisaar are provided by Waide Motel in Käo village.
- 17. Trepimägi Hill** is one of the most beautiful and most popular recreation areas on the east coast of Lake Võrtsjärv. Here you can see the glacial erratic Neitsikivi (Maidenstone). The beach is suitable for bathing. The ancient Vehendi village is one of the oldest in Rannu Parish, the land here has been cultivated for at least 2500 years.
- 18. Tamme outcrop.** The protected 200 m long and up to 8 m high mid-Devonian sandstone outcrop won fame already in the 19th century for finds of extinct armoured fish. A hiking trail of a couple of kilometres, with stairs and picnic areas, follows the edge of the outcrop.

