



Viljandi



town and

country

travelguide



#visitviljandi
visitviljandi.ee/en

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**You can get tourist information
from places marked
with this sign!**

6 reasons to visit

Viljandi Country:



VILJANDI – a beautiful small town by Lake Viljandi in a spacious valley. The special cultural atmosphere and quiet, romantic streets are accentuated by huge red concrete strawberries. Time changes its meaning here.



VILJANDI FOLK MUSIC FESTIVAL – a folk music event of global fame.



OLUSTVERE – the most perfectly preserved manor complex in Estonia with various studios and workshops offering activities for visitors of any age.

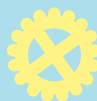


SOOMAA NATIONAL PARK – a place where floods are not regarded as a national catastrophe but as “the fifth season” – an ancient rhythm of the nature resulting in a special culture featuring dugout canoes and bridges.



LAKE VÕRTSJÄRV – the largest domestic body of water in Estonia which offers visitors both sights of natural beauty and fun activities.

THE MULGI REGION – a historic flax cultivation area which is to this day known for its authentic Mulgi dialect, the traditional black Mulgi longcoat and a special food culture.



Viljandi



Although Viljandi is more than seven hundred years old, its place in the distinguished list of European Hanseatic towns often gives rise to curiosity. It is, after all, a small town in a hilly area far from the sea and the major waterways ...

The ancient fort of Viljandi was first mentioned in 1154 by explorer al-Idrisi. The construction of a stone castle began in the 13th century when the region had been invaded by the Livonian Brothers of the Sword. The castle became one of the largest fortification complexes in the Baltic countries and was soon surrounded by a developing settlement of merchants and craftsmen. Viljandi had a favourable location. It was situated by a then-navigable waterway and had an important role as a transit town on the Riga-Pärnu-Viljandi-Tartu- Novgorod route. The population and riches of the town grew to a point where Viljandi was granted town rights under the Lübeck law in **1283** and admitted to the distinguished Hanseatic League in **1346**.

1. You can see the white **St. John's Church** along the edge of Freedom Square. The church was built on the ruins of a Franciscan convent and it was used as a storage building during the Soviet era. The church was reconstructed after the restoration of independence and is also widely used as a concert venue. The tapestry "Jacob's Ladder" by Prof. Anu Raud, a local textile artist, can be seen in the church.
2. The main building of **Viljandi Manor** is visible across the park from St. John's Church. The town and the manor are more or less of the same age but the main building of the manor has stood in its current place only since the mid-18th century when a wooden mansion was built there. A new mansion was built between 1879 and 1880 to provide a fitting residence for Oswald, son of Paul von Ungern-Sternberg. For today the building has been renovated and houses the boutique hotel Schloss Fellin. The monument to the victims of repressions in Viljandi (designed by Aate-Heli Õun) in front of the main building of the manor was unveiled on June 14, 1991, on the 50th anniversary of the first mass deportation in Estonia during which roughly 10,000 residents of Viljandi County were either executed by the Soviet regime or sent to the Siberian prison camps. From June 23, 2023, a memorial to those who died in the War of Independence will once again be located by the Freedom Square. The pillar which originally located there was destroyed by the Soviet occupation authorities in 1941.





3. The spot behind the park has a great view of the **Viljandi Singing Ground**. Estonians think of themselves as singing people and traditional song festivals are held in all major towns. "Dawn" by M. Lüdigi, the opening song of every Estonian song festival, was originally written and dedicated to the Viljandi singing society "Koit" (Dawn).
4. On your way to the Castle Park, you will pass the **equestrian monument** (by Terje Ojaver) erected in 2004 in memory of **General Johan Laidoner**, commander-in-chief of the Estonian troops in the Estonian War of Independence, who was born in Viljandi County. The notable statesman was born in Viiratsi near Viljandi and was the first Citizen of Honour of Viljandi.
5. If you have time and want to walk a little further, you can go and find one of the most unusual natural features in Viljandi – a 6 m high and 18 m long red-brown **sandstone outcrop** right in the middle of the town.
6. If you choose to turn back, you will find a path next to the Singing Ground which leads you to the famous **suspension bridge of Viljandi**, granted to the town in 1931 by Karl von Mensenkampff, owner of Tarvastu Manor. The bridge is over 50 m long and it has become the best known symbol of the town.
7. You have arrived right in the middle of the former **medieval Ordensburg**. Its construction was commenced in 1224 by the Livonian Brothers of the Sword who built their castle in the place of an earlier Estonian wooden fort. The castle became the seat of the local Commander who wielded great political and economic power. It was the largest castle in the whole of the Old Livonia. The ruins of the castle, heavily damaged in various wars, give a sense of the glory of old times. The famous Viljandi Folk Music festival is held here every summer.
8. This is the spot with **the best view of Lake Viljandi** and its surroundings. It is allegedly one of the most photographed places in Estonia. A legend tells us about a boatman who fell in love with a beautiful blue-eyed maiden during a boat ride and rows his boat on the lake to this day, still longing to meet her again.
9. Turning back to the town, you will pass the old granary on Kirsimägi (Cherry Hill) which has housed the **Estonian Traditional Music Centre** since the spring of 2008. The building contains an excellent concert venue, a library and August Pulst School. The Viljandi Folk Music Festival begins here in July every year – a music feast of 4 days and nights bringing together over 17 thousand music lovers from near and far.
www.folk.ee/en | Tel +372 434 2070

10. Then walk over the **Vares Bridge** next to the granary. The bridge was nicknamed after Dr. Jaan Vares, the Mayor in 1925 when the bridge was built.

11. **The Kondas Centre** exhibits the paintings of schoolteacher Paul Kondas (1900–85), holds temporary exhibitions of professional art, naivism and outsider art as well as workshops and collects information about works of self-taught artists. Paul Kondas' most famous **painting "Strawberry Eaters"** is the source of inspiration behind the huge, colourful strawberries you see here and there on the streets of Viljandi.

www.kondas.ee/en | Tel +372 5340 1768

12. The corner of Pikk Street provides another wonderful **view of the lake**. A towering **oak tree** gives shade and invites to take a moment off and try the swing. Then you can explore the narrow **Kassisaba Street**, reconstructed with the local initiative and effort, which leads you through greenery to Trepimägi. You can also walk back a bit and go to the Laidoner Square via Lutsu Street or downhill to the beach via Pikk Street.



Photo by: visitestonia x Rivo Veber

13. **The hiking trail around Lake Viljandi** starts right next to the sports arena. The trail is 13,5 km long and suitable for both walking and cycling. The trail offers beautiful views of Lake Viljandi (at Huntaugu and Järveotsa) and of the town across the lake (Viiratsi Hill). Vesiflirdi Avenue leads you to the beach where you can rent a boat to admire the view of the town on the hill slope.



14. When approaching Trepimägi, you will encounter the **sculpture "Runner"** (by Riho Kuld and Ülo Stöör) which symbolizes the winner of the traditional run around Lake Viljandi, held since 1928. The complex includes pillars of granite plates with the winners' names engraved.

15. The stairs of **Trepimägi** were built at the turn of the 20th century in order to improve the connection between the town and the lake area. The stairs consist of five sections and 158 steps in total. Villas typical to the old town centre of Viljandi can be seen on Trepimägi and its vicinity.

16. If you have never been to **Kassisaba Street**, the curious green corner of the town centre is well worth a look. This centuries-old small and narrow street (with a name meaning 'cat's tail') was recently cleared of bushes and reconstructed with the initiative and effort of local people.

17. Now look for the **Town Hall!** The building from 1768-1774 is one of the oldest preserved stone buildings in Viljandi. The clock tower dates back to 1931 when the building was significantly reconstructed. Behind the Town Hall, you can see a lovely rose garden and a fragment of the old town wall. A sculpture of the legendary Mayor **August Maramaa** (by Aili Vahtrapuu) stands next to the Town Hall.
18. The 30 m high **Old Water Tower of Viljandi** allowed the townspeople to have running water in 1911. The building is now reconstructed as an observation tower with a view over the whole town from its upper levels. Tel +372 433 3992
19. **The Johan Laidoner Square** was used as a market square in the 19th century. Now it attracts visitors with the **fountain “Boy with a Fish”** (sculptor: August Vomm). The newly renovated Park Hotell Viljandi with its atrium converted from an old yard stands by the square. Looking towards Lossi Street, you will see old wooden houses, the oldest stone building in the town (a granary) visible among them.
20. One of the notable houses of the town is the old pharmacy building by the square which dates back to 1780 and has housed **Viljandi Museum** since 1942. The permanent exhibitions of the museum describe the local history from the prehistoric age to modern days. You can see a reconstruction of the Viljandi ordensburg, an old threshing room, taxidermied specimens of the common animal and bird species, weapons, ethnic costumes and jewellery.
muuseum.viljandimaa.ee | Tel +372 433 3316
21. Behind the museum stands the **monument of Johann Köler**, a world-famous painter from Viljandi County (by Edgar Viies and Rein Luup). Johann Köler was born in Viljandi County and went on to be the pioneer of Estonian painting.
22. Take a look at the monument of **Carl Robert Jakobson**, a leading figure of the Estonian national awakening era (by Mati Karmin). C.R. Jakobson established the Estonian newspaper “Sakala” in Viljandi in 1878.
23. There is a pedestrian street in the middle of the town centre where a fascinating combination of historic elements is exhibited – fragments of the medieval town wall, a modern walk with original fountains and benches as well as examples of traditional timber architecture. The **Garden of Arcadia** with its rather dreamlike name is inspired by a dancing and leisure place from the 1930s with the same nickname.

24. Walking from the Garden of Arcadia to Väike-Turu Street, you will see a lovely light green wooden house – the **Bonifatius Guild** which preserves the old Hanseatic traditions, serves delicious meals and sells beautiful handicraft.

www.bonifatiussegild.ee | Tel +372 5814 7783

25. In front of the sports hall stands the monument of **Martin Klein**, a famous figure of the Estonian sports history and the first Estonian Olympic medalist (sculptor: Mati Karmin). The Greco-Roman wrestler from Viljandi County won the longest wrestling match ever (11 hours 40 minutes) at the Olympic Games of 1912 in Stockholm and received the silver medal.

26. The majestic **St. Paul's Church** can be seen a bit further away, standing on a small hill. It was built for the local rural congregation between 1863 and 1866. The new church proved necessary as the rural congregation had grown and outgrown the town church. A memorial stone to Captain Anton Irv, killed in the Estonian War of Independence, stands on the Church Hill.

27. Looking to the left, you see the impressive theatre building. **The Ugala Theatre** was established in 1920 on the basis of the acting groups of the singing society "Koit" (Dawn) and the temperance society "Vabadus" (Freedom). The theatre has used its current building since 1981. Both then and after the latest renovation, the Ugala Theatre can boast the best technical equipment and opportunities in the Baltic countries.

www.ugala.ee | Tel +372 433 0777

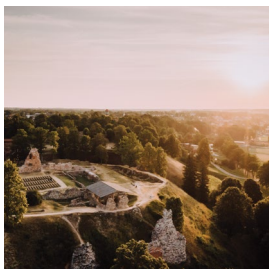


Photo by: visitestonia x Rivo Veber

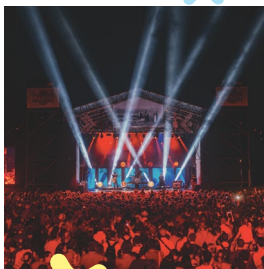


Photo by: Silver Tõnisson



Photo by: Silver Tõnisson



Photo by: Silver Tõnisson



Photo by: visitestonia x Näljane Nelik

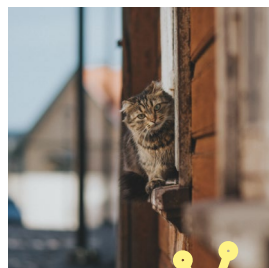


Photo by: Silver Tõnisson

Sakalamaa



The Sakala region was the home of the first Estonian that history knows by name – Lembitu, chief of Sakala.

1. On the northern border of the county lies the small **Pilistvere** village. The place is allegedly special for its good energy vibes. One of the local sights is **Pilistvere Church**, the rural church with the highest tower in Estonia. Its pulpit with its various ornaments is also worth seeing. The graveyard by the church is the burial place of Jüri Wilms, a statesman from the first years of the Republic of Estonia.
2. **Pilistvere Memorial** is located approx. one kilometre further away. It is a grave-shaped stone pile with a cross at one end. Estonians carry stones to the pile in memory of their family members deported to Siberia.
3. If you choose to pass through **Võhma**, you could visit the local **candle factory** to arrange a short tour and to cast a lucky candle for yourself. www.valgusevabrik.ee | Tel +372 437 7075; +372 5340 3732
4. A sign directs to Olustvere from the Viljandi-Tallinn road. Turning to the indicated direction, you will arrive at a beautiful, long avenue with the total length of approx. 16 km. **Olustvere manor complex** is located 3 km from the main road; it was built in the beginning of the 20th century and is one of the best examples of the Heimatschutz architecture in Estonia. The manor was the summer residence of the Fersen family who were originally from northern Germany. The manor complex now functions as the Olustvere Tourism Centre. Here you can book a guide for a tour in the renovated auxiliary buildings with a collection of taxidermied birds and an exhibition of miniature wooden horses. You can learn about the history of the local distillery in the distillery building which also houses a glass workshop and a ceramic workshop. The complex also includes a handicraft house, a smithy and a patchwork workshop; the main building houses an exhibition of antique furniture. You can try out bread-baking with an instructor at the bakery building; an exhibition in the building shows how the land was worked back in the manor days, up to actual bread-baking. The manor buildings are surrounded by a beautiful, spacious park. The oldest tree in the park is a 300-year-old forked oak tree. The tree is known as the Love Oak and people still tell interesting legends about it. The manor offers riding opportunities by prior arrangement. www.olustveremois.ee | Tel +372 437 4280

The **Orion Observatory** is located near the Manor and is open for everyone to explore with an advance notice. Those who are interested can see and participate in memorable physics experiments and discover the interesting world of science. www.tahetorn.eu | Tel+372 5556 1772

5. Driving towards Suure-Jaani, you will soon see a metal sign pointing to **Lõhavere Hillfort**. The fort of the Estonian chief Lembitu was established in the end of the 12th century. Near the hillfort stands a monument of the Battle of St. Matthew's Day in the days of the ancient Estonian freedom fight.

6



6. **Suure-Jaani** attracts visitors with its beautiful reservoir. It's a good place to make a longer stop and look around. The sights include the **Lembitu monument** in memory of the casualties of the Estonian War of Independence and **Suure-Jaani Church** from the beginning of the 14th century. There is a ringed cross embedded in the inner wall of the church tower, the so-called Cross of Anne. Legend has it that a woman named Anne had washed and clothed bodies of plague victims during the Livonian War and the local rural people had dedicated this cross to her. Several cultural figures have been buried at the Suure-Jaani cemetery: painter Johann Köler, famous members of the composer family Kapp, composer Mart Saar and the comital family Fersen of Olustvere Manor. If you are interested in the musical history of Estonia, you could stop by at the **house-museum of the Kapp family**. Tel +372 5193 6420

Walking along the avenue from Lake Suure-Jaani, you will see the **bust-portrait of the Naivist painter Paul Kondas**. The Kondas Centre in Viljandi offers a closer look at Kondas' quirky sense of humour and his paintings. **Suure-Jaani Health Centre** welcomes visitors to enjoy bathing and sauna. www.tervisekoda.ee | Tel +372 432 8124

7. Driving from Suure-Jaani towards Vändra, you will see **Lahmuse Manor** on the right-hand side of the road. The mansion from 1837 is inspired by the late classicist style. The central manor buildings stand around the lawn in front of the main building, other auxiliary buildings are placed further to the back – the most attractive of those is the stables with a six-pillared open front.

8. **The house-museum of composer Mart Saar** is located in Hüpasaare, right on the edge of the bog. Its most exclusive item is the organ made by Mart Saar's uncle and given to the future composer on his 8th birthday, which can still be played. muuseum.viljandimaa.ee/martsaar/ | Tel +372 435 7141, +372 521 6675

4



Hüpassaare is worth visiting for another reason – a **boardwalk to the Kuresoo bog ponds** begins here, next to an information board about the Soomaa National Park. A hiking tour to the open landscape of Soomaa is an unforgettable experience for every nature lover.

9. In Vihi village, you can visit **Energy Farm** specializing in medicinal plants and herbs. Besides meditative walks along plant-themed trails and beautiful natural views from the **observational tower of the tea house**, the farm can offer fascinating sauna rituals by prior arrangement to those who wish to experience something special.
www.energialu.ee | Tel +372 510 6193
10. Driving further along the main road towards Vändra, you will find the starting point of the 12 km long **“Sakala Way”** hiking trail across the road from the Vanaõue Holiday Centre. The famous cultural figure C. R. Jakobson used the route between his home at Kurgja Farm and Viljandi where he worked as the editor of the newspaper “Sakala”. At the **Vanaõue Holiday Centre** it is possible to enjoy canoe trips and catch trout. www.vanaoue.ee | Tel +372 521 2148
11. After driving 9,2 km from Olustvere towards Tääksi, you will arrive at Aimla village where signs direct you to the Parika Nature Reserve. After 2,1km, you will reach the starting point of the 3,6 km long **Parika Väikejärv** study trail. The trail passes through a varying forest landscape and rises to a bog slope where you can have a picnic and bathe in a bog lake. The circular trail runs around the small heart-shaped lake, passing bog ponds and rich berry grounds.
12. **Kildu Riding Centre** offers riding and wagon tours by prior arrangement.
www.kildu.ee | Tel +372 506 2283
13. The ornamental garden of **Nõrga Farm** offers both beautiful views for garden lovers and plants to buy.
www.norgatalu.eu | Tel +372 515 0248
- If you choose to drive towards Kolga-Jaani, you will discover more sights on your way:
14. A couple of kilometres after exiting the town, a sign indicates “Peetrimõisa 2”. Turning to the left from the main road, you will reach Väikemõisa bus stop after a couple of hundred metres; a fine oak avenue leads to the left, to **Väikemõisa Mansion**.

2



8



Väikemõisa Mansion from the beginning of the 20th century is an example of Heimatschutz architecture: a picturesque building with a high base wall and main story built of combined granite and brick; the upper story is plastered and constructed with a dark timber frame. Note the vaulted main entrance. A large park surrounds the house. The history of the manor begins in the late 1890s. The manor remained in the hands of its last owners, the Helmersen family, even after the Land Reform, as it was no major estate. After Viktor von Helmersen junior left in 1939, the remaining carpets, paintings, furniture and dining sets from the manor were sold at an auction. In 1948–2012, the former Väikemõisa Mansion functioned as a children's home for young children.

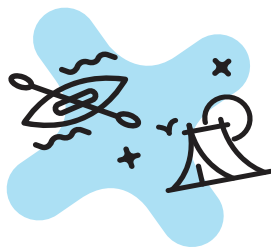
15. Ca 17 km from the town, a sign on the left side of the road directs to the 100 m long boardwalk and the **observation tower at Parika bog**, with an excellent view of the oblong, complex-shaped **Lake Parika**. Parika bog has developed from a postglacial body of water. The oblong, articulated relict lake is called Lake Parika. The lake has several rare water plant species, e. g. algae of the class Zygnematophyceae. The two small bog lakes are called Väikejärv and Pühajärv. Parika bog – mainly a wooded bog with low-growing pine trees – is one of the oldest raised bogs in Estonia. Its assumed age is approx. 9000 years.
16. **Kolga-Jaani** has developed from the old parish centre. During the rule of the Livonian Order, these lands belonged to Põltsamaa bailiwick. The area was densely populated and also used to sell serfs to other regions. **Kolga-Jaani St. John's Church** dates from the first half of the 14th century. It was a simple, unvaulted rectangular building without tower or chancel. The church was probably vaulted in the end of the 14th century. It has a medieval tabernacle and lavabo in the east wall of the church. The church repeatedly suffered damage in wars but the vaults were preserved. After the Great Northern War, the church was re-roofed first in 1742. The times of chaos before that are perhaps preserved in folk legends: one tells about how hunters found Kolga-Jaani Church in a dense forest after they had lit a fire on a higher spot and found themselves on the ceiling of the church. Others tell about people seeking shelter from robbers and wild animals on the vaults of the church. The western tower in pseudo-Gothic style was built in 1875. Villem Reimann, one of the leaders of the Estonian national movement, was the pastor Kolga-Jaani from 1890 to 1917.
17. The **birthplace of General Johann Laidoner** is marked with a monument and an avenue on the other side of Lake Viljandi, by the ring road of the town.

On the way from Viljandi towards Tartu:

18. After Teemeistri bus stop, you can see a sign pointing to the left – to **Viiralt's Oak**. The so-called Tammekoori oak tree, depicted by the artist Eduard Viiralt on his drypoint "Viljandi Landscape", is the best known old tree in Viljandi County, despite only being the seventh largest.
19. Soon afterwards, a sign directs to the left from the main road – to Vana-Võidu. Here you can see the **main building of Vana-Võidu Manor**. The earliest references to Wõidumaa Manor date back to 1507. The manor has been owned by the families Wrangler, Albedyll, Posse and Jürgenson. In 1834, it was purchased by Constantin von Stryk who built the most of the manor complex. The classicist mansion was built in 1830–1836. The manor park and avenue with the forest park were established during the same period. The beautiful oak avenue is 548 m long. The Stryks owned the manor until its nationalisation in 1919. From 1921, the mansion was used for an agricultural school. The school now functions as Viljandi Vocational Training Centre.
20. The old fishing village Valma is known for its eel fishing traditions. And **Valma Adventure Park**, with its thrilling climbing courses and a zipline is fun for both children and adults. www.valma.ee | Tel +372 50 36 906
21. **Oiu** is an old fishing village, first mentioned in 1599, with the wellpreserved former Oiu Dairy. The historic harbour site has been reconstructed and has a lovely view of Tānassilma River and Oiu flood meadow. **Oiu Harbour** provides canoe trips and boat rent by prior arrangement. There is also a hiking trail in the vicinity. www.oiusadam.ee
22. **Vaibla** is a good place for bathing and beach promenades.
23. **Meleski Glass Museum**. The 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 the factory were even used at the Tsar's palace. Ville Dreving's small museum-collection in Meleski includes over 1000 examples of locally manufactured glass products and other items related to the factory. The museum can be visited by prior arrangement. Tel +372 5648 9406
24. By the source of River Emajõgi, on Rannu-Jõesuu recreation area, there is a house built of green building materials (wood, wood chips, clay, straw) – the **Võrtsjärv Visitor Centre**. It provides information on recreation and accommodation opportunities in the Võrtsjärv area, and you can also arrange sailing boat trips on Lake Võrtsjärv and buy souvenirs made by local craftsmen. There is an observation tower near the Centre. www.vortsjarv.com | Tel +372 5066 426



Soomaa



is worth visiting in every season.

1. **Soomaa National Park** was founded in 1993 for the protection of untouched bogs, flood meadows with rich plant and animal life, wooded meadows and forests. The varied nature of Soomaa, its unique culture featuring suspension bridges and dugout canoes and its five seasons have made the area popular among nature-loving travellers as well as weekend visitors. 20 kilometres from Viljandi towards Pärnu, before entering Kõpu, there is a sign directing to the right, to Soomaa National Park. Here you begin a journey from the Sakala upland down to Pärnu lowland.

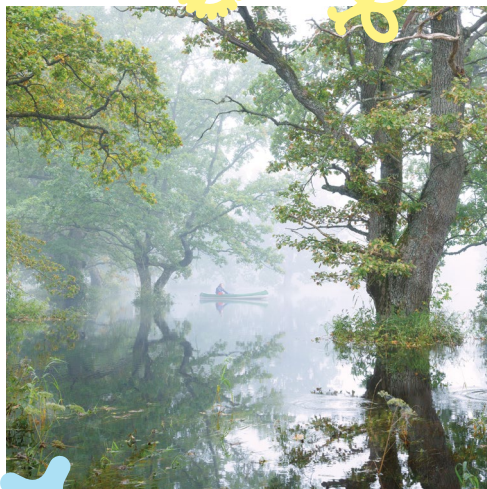


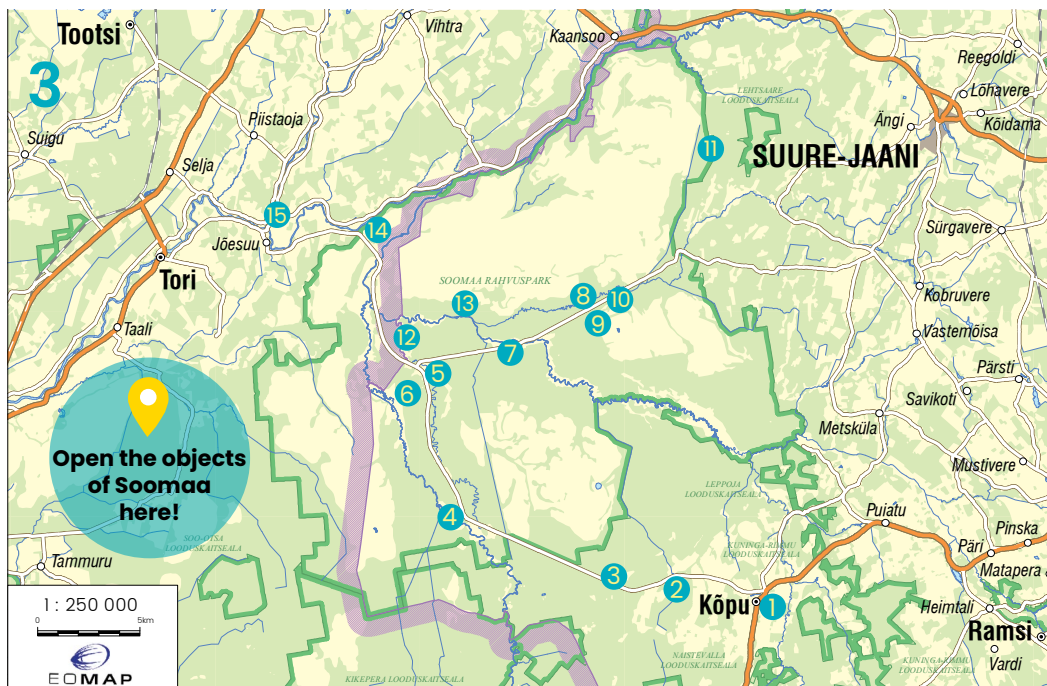
Photo by: visitestonia x Jarek Jõepera



2. Before you take the turn towards Soomaa, you could stop by in Kõpu. The smallish classicist **Kõpu St. Peter's Church** (built in 1821-1825) has a brick floor and a sturdy historicist-style tower. The altar wall inside the church is decorated with half-pillars with antique form and beams. The altar painting by an unknown artist, "Let the Little Children Come to Me", has a unique narrative content. Some epitaphs of the patron family von Stryk are preserved. The **wall paintings in Suure-Kõpu Manor**, unique in Estonia, are also worth seeing. www.facebook.com/sakalamatuurismikeskus | Tel +372 433 0100

Canoe trips and bog hikes can be ordered:

www.soomaa.com | Tel +372 5061896

At **Uia village**, about three kilometres from Kõpu intersection, the terrain evens out. You have reached Pärnu lowland. The change in heights can be perceived both when driving and when riding a bike.



3. A couple of hundred metres before Iia village, a sign points to **Õõrdi study trail**. The trail begins from a campsite with a forest hut and a campfire site. The study trail follows a forest ride and leads to **Lake Õõrdi**. 17 
4. Continuing your drive, you will arrive to the recreation site of **Läti observation tower**. It's a comfortable spot for a short rest and for enjoying lovely views, especially at sunset. The tower is over six metres high and offers picturesque views of the flood meadow. During the flood, this is one of the few places in Soomaa where one can watch the flood from dry land. 18 
5. **The Soomaa National Park Centre** is located in Kõrtsi-Tõramaa. The building from 1998 stands at a crossing of old winter roads, on the land of the former Tõramaa-Kõrtsi farm. The permanent exhibition helps every visitor to learn more about the national park. Information materials and souvenirs can be bought. Next to the centre is the beginning of the **Beaver Trail** where you can get various information about the life of beavers and see the signs of their activity. 0,6 km of the 1,8 km long trail is accessible in wheelchair. The visitor centre has a playground where children can play and climb. You can also camp and make a campfire at Kõrtsi-Tõramaa.

www.loodusegakoos.ee | Tel+372 526 1924

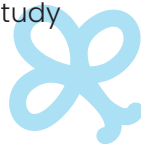
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6.



Photo by: Siim Verner Teder

Across the main road near the centre is the beginning of a study trail leading to the beautiful **Tõramaa wooded meadow.**



19



7. If you drive towards Pärnu along the Kõpu-Tipu-Jõesuu road, the road turns to Kildu after a couple of hundred metres. After approx. six kilometres, the road crosses Raudna River. During the flood, the bridge is the only dry spot in the vicinity where the owner of Kuusekäära farm can keep his car. Flood makes many roads in Soomaa inaccessible for cars, so it's more sensible to use a canoe or a boat to get around. **Lemmjõe study trail** is located right after the bridge, to the left.



Photo by: visitestonia x Evolumina

22



8. When you continue towards Kildu, there is a sign to the left after a couple of kilometres – to **Mulgi meadow.** The picturesque sparsely wooded meadow is beautiful in every season. You can also see an original arch bridge with iron structure and wooden cladding.



23



9. When you return to the road and drive one kilometre further, you arrive at **Kuuraniidu study trail**. There is a boardwalk to the right from the road, leading to the detritus-rich wetland forest.

21



10. After a few kilometres, you can enjoy the view of **Oksa flood meadows.** **Oksa recreation areas** provide arranged campfire sites and allow you to relax in the beautiful wooded meadow. If you hike upstream along Lemmjõe River, you can see the ruins of an old inn with a preserved mantel chimney.

24



11.



Photo by: visitestonia x Rivo Veber

When you drive on towards Ärma Farm, a sign points to the left indicating **Hüpassaare study trail**. After 7,4 kilometres from the intersection, you arrive at the 4,4 kilometres long Hüpassaare study trail which presents one of the largest raised bogs in Soomaa, the especially picturesque Kuresoo Bog. The house-museum of composer Mart Saar is located near the beginning of the trail.

4



If you drive back to Tõramaa and then towards Jõesuu:

- 12. Meiekose study trail** follows an old road. The bridge at the end of the trail has a wonderful view of Raudna River and its surroundings. Just after the bridge, the road turns to the right and leads you to the Meiekose recreation areas, with campfire sites and good fishing opportunities. There is also a forest hut for sleeping. This is one of the areas where driving on the main road is impossible during the flood: the river expands approx. twenty metres from its usual bed and floods the otherwise decent road.

25



- 13.** The narrow road leads you further to **Ingatsi study trail** that in its turn leads you to the highest (8 m) bog slope in Estonia (and in the whole Europe, according to some estimates). There is an observation tower and a boardwalk to bog ponds.



Photo by: Siim Verner Teder

26

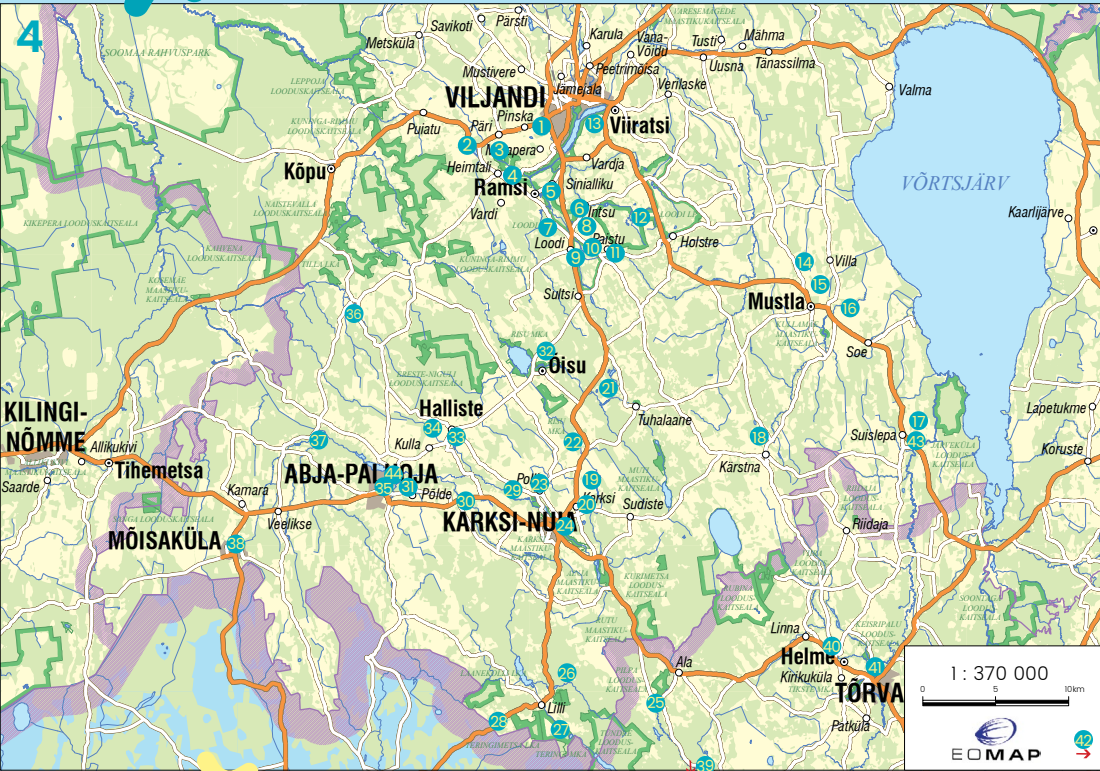


- 14.** When you drive on along the main road, you will see a parking lot to the right, at the beginning of the approx. 5 kilometres long boardwalk to **Riisa bog** which is one of the smallest bogs in Soomaa but outstandingly beautiful. A 1,2 km long section of Riisa study trail is also accessible in wheelchair.

27



- 15. Jõesuu** at the border of Soomaa has got its name (Rivermouth in English) from the junction of two rivers. Navesti River flows into Pärnu River here. Behind the little Jõesuu shop, you can walk on the longest **suspension bridge** in Estonia and look down into the waters.



Open the
objects of
Mulgimaa
here!



Mulgimaa



The famous wealth of Mulgimaa was based on flax cultivation which became more popular in the beginning of the 19th century. People in the Mulgi area of southern Viljandi County were the first Estonian farmers who bought their farms from the manor lords after the abolition of serfdom. Each parish of Mulgimaa now boasts a grand wooden sculpture greeting visitors.

1. Just after leaving the town, you can tackle the **“Green Rails”** either on foot or on a bike – it is a hiking trail along the old narrow-gauge railway embankment. Trails with varying length welcome you to explore the routes to Kivi Farm, Loodi railway station and from there to Õisu, Halliste, Abja-Paluoja and all the way to Mõisaküla.
www.greenrailways.eu
2. **Heimtali Community Museum** in the old village school shows examples of ethnic handicraft collected at the initiative of textile artist Anu Raud, see old household items and see what a century-old classroom looked like.
www.erm.ee/et/content/heimtali-muuseum | Tel +372 439 8126
3. **Heimtali manor complex** is located on the edge of Raudna primeval valley. The manor complex from the 19th century consists of the classicist main building, the steward's house and **circular stables** now converted into a sports hall. Heimtali Park was established in the latter half of the 19th century by the von Sievers family. The forest park is a broadleaf wooded area with numerous springs on the slope of a deep gulch.
www.visitestonia.com/en/heimtali-manor-and-park | Tel +372 435 1098
An auxiliary building of the manor now houses the **Heimtali Creative Workshop** where visitors can try out making clay ceramics.
www.heimtaliloomestuudio.com | Tel +372 5665 3819
4. **Heimtali Distillery**, later also the manor's creamery, is attractive for its beautiful natural surroundings and four corner towers – ventilation chimneys. Next to the distillery, you find the **Heimtali study trail** presenting the most common deciduous trees in Estonia. The study trail consists of two routes with different length.
5. The northern part of the Loodi Nature Park is in Viljandi primeval valley which is claimed to be the oldest primeval valley of the Sakala region.



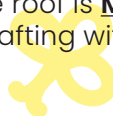
There was an Estonian fort at **Sinialliku Hillfort**, built in the 12th–13th century. The spring water has a bluish tinge due to blue-grey sediments in the bottom. The spring **Siniallikas** (Blue Spring) is a well-known sacrificial spring with allegedly healing water. Sinialliku hiking trail leads to the spring. You can reach the trail either from the old Sinialliku railway station or from its other end at Karksi-Nuia – Viljandi road. If you choose the latter alternative, you will first reach a large campfire site with enough camping space for a larger group.

13



6. On the ground floor of the house with the cheerful blue roof is **Mulgi Clay Workshop**. Here you can experience the fun of crafting with clay and buy beautiful things!

www.mulgisavikoda.ee | Tel +372 5661 6526



7. **The beautiful garden of Risttee Farm** is open for visitors by prior arrangement.

www.ristteetalu.ee | Tel +372 5566 1092

8. **Loodi-Püstmäe** has one of the in Estonia oldest (planted in 1820) and largest European larch stands. Some trees are up to 42 metres high.

14



At Püstmäe Farm in Loodi village, you can visit the **Fairytale Farm** where the hostess tells fantastical and instructive stories.

www.piretpaar.com/jutumaja | jutupiret@gmail.com

9. The old **Loodi Manor** now houses a workshop for those interested in ethnic woodcarving. In an auxiliary building is **the World's Loneliest Lamp Shop** that sells or exhibits lamps in various shapes made from a single piece of wood, made by a local master craftsman.

www.paikesepuu.ee | Tel +372 58 191 202

10. The beautiful surroundings of **Loodi Reservoir** behind the manor is perfect for recreation, not only for local people but also for visitors. Beside the recreation area begins a **hiking trail** to the picturesque Paistu primeval valley with numerous outcrops. The largest is called **Loodi Hell** where a spring flows from a cave in its lower part. The 'Hell' can also be reached from the road to Paistu. Signs lead the visitor to the parking lot; the distance from there to the outcrop is just about twenty metres.

15



11. **Paistu Virgin Mary Church**. The earliest references to Paistu Church date from 1329, the time of a Lithuanian plundering. The stone church, probably built in the end of the 13th century, had no tower. The archaic eight-part ribbed vault of the chancel is preserved; its painting imitating a starry sky was completed in 1903.

A tower was built in 1862–66. Legend has it that the place got its name from the tower that could be seen from afar (paistma – to be visible). In the current centre of Paistu, you can see a **big wooden sculpture – „Sitting Mulgi Man“**



12. **Holstre–Polli Sports and Recreation Centre** has skiing, hiking, orienteering and mountain biking trails with various length and complexity that are tended year-round. There are grilling sites and covered sitting areas for relaxing and picnics.
www.holstrepolli.ee | Tel +37253047829
13. **General Johann Laidoner's birthplace**, with a monument and an avenue, is located on the other side of Lake Viljandi, by the ring road of the town.
14. Before Mustla, approx. 20,5 km from Viljandi, a sign directs to the left to **Lusika Farm** which has even received an award from the Estonian president for its beauty. Walking trails and ritual sites are open for visitors by prior arrangement.
lusikatalu.pri.ee | Tel +372 505 2697
15. 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**.
16. 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.

17. After passing **Mustla**, it would be a good idea to stop by in **Suislepa**. **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. **Urka memorial stone**, commemorating the Great Famine in Suislepa in 1695-1697, is located near the school.

www.suislepa.ee | Tel +372 515 3541

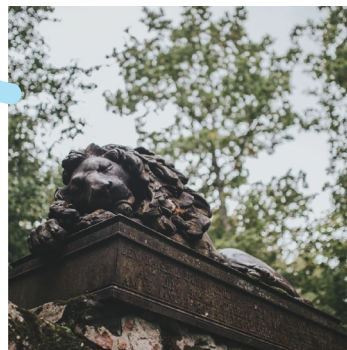


Photo by: Kris Süld

18. Now you should turn to the right from the main road, towards Kärstna. 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

Some details to consider when travelling to Karksi:

19. **The Karksi manor centre** is not located immediately near the Karksi Castle but a couple of kilometres away, in Karksi. The sights include a park with ponds and some auxiliary buildings, the finest of which is a granary with a classicist profiled facade. The substantial L-shaped steward's house is also preserved.
20. **Karksi Castle Hill** is located in the most picturesque part of the area. It is assumed that there was an Estonian fortress on the steep-sloped, naturally well-protected hill, predating the crusaders' invasion. The first German stronghold, probably a timber-built one, was burned down by Lithuanians in 1298. Construction of a stone fortress probably wasn't started until the beginning of the next century. The baroque **St. Peter's Church** was built in the ruins in the 1770s, partially using the foundation of the fortress. Due to the weak ground, the church tower now leans over one metre to the west. After the Great Northern War, Empress Elizaveta Petrovna of Russia gave the free use of Karksi Manor to one of her generals, Georg Reinhold Lieven. **The burial chapel of Field Marshal Lieven**, built in 1730, is located to the north of the church.
21. **Murri House** is an architecturally unique Southern Estonian two-story farmhouse which can be regarded as an example of the rural culture of the first decades of the Estonian independence period. The first owner of the farm was Jaan Puskar who acquired the house and the land in 1900. Unfortunately, the farm could not be successfully managed and was foreclosed by Sakala Bank in 1925. After the war, the buildings were used by Kurvitsa Horticultural Sovkhoz and Õisu Sovkhoz. The buildings and the ornamental garden are now restored.
Tel +372 56 958 776
22. **The Oti apple tree** is the oldest and thickest wild apple tree in Estonia with its 488 cm diameter and 11 m height. Despite storm related damage suffered in 2019, the tree is still alive.
23. **Polli Manor** was initially a pastoral manor belonging to Karksi Manor. It became an independent estate in the late 1720s. As a well-managed manor, it was particularly suitable as an agricultural study facility after the Land Reform; it became an agricultural school focusing on horticulture in 1920. The horticultural school has now developed into Polli Horticultural Research Centre but it no longer uses the manor buildings. The old manor buildings are currently being restored by the new owner.
24. On the edge of the primeval valley on the outskirts of **Karksi-Nuia**, local-born playwright and writer August Kitzberg sits cast in bronze (monument by Jaak Soans).



In front of the Culture Centre in the town centre, you can see the **wooden sculpture “Dancing Mulgi Couple”**. The 6 km long Sokaoru ski and walking trail is located to the right just before you enter the town.

Enno Allik's study and gallery is located in Karksi-Nuia, Uus St. 13. Visitors may view the exhibition and meet the artist by prior arrangement.
Tel +372 566 31522

25. Mulgi Experience Centre is a cultural landmark and carrier of the Mulgi identity that brings together information and cultural heritage. The centre is an attraction, competence and training centre, a place to hold events as well as a seller of local products and services. The Mulgi Experience Centre connects different eras and values and carries an important role in raising awareness on the Mulgi people.
mulgielamuskeskus.ee | Tel +372 5617150

26. Heading from Karksi-Nuia to Lilli, you will find the **Lilli Nature House** in the former Polli Forest District building. The buildings date from 1865 when the owner of Polli Manor had a house built for his chief forester at the pastoral manor at Lilli. An information board shows the way to the **study trail** from the Nature House. The hiking trail leads along old avenues to the forest and a beautiful rowan grove. You can see the rare Lobaria lichen and listen to the silence of the forest. One branch of the trail leads the hiker to **Virapuu Boulder**, a bread-shaped glacial erratic.



27. Teringi study trail begins 1,5 km from Lilli village and provides an overview of the Teringi Landscape Reserve – mosaic-like wetlands. The trail is equipped with information boards.



28. The monument of the 20th anniversary of the Baltic Way was unveiled at Lilli-Ungurini border station in 2009. The monument, actually located in Latvia, depicts seven life-sized human figures cut out of a metal wall, standing in a row and holding hands. Every visitor can stand in the place of a figure and feel as if participating in the Baltic Way. On the 50th anniversary of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact on August 23, 1989, nearly two million people joined their hands in a 600-kilometre-long human chain between Tallinn and Vilnius as a peaceful protest against the Soviet occupation in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania that resulted from the pact. The Baltic Way is included in UNESCO's Memory of the World register.

29. When you continue your journey from Karksi-Nuia towards Abja, the **Room-Museum of August Kitzberg** is located on the right-hand side after 3 km.

The classic figure of Estonian literature worked as a municipal and court clerk. Here he got inspiration for his works (of which the play "Werewolf" is the best known). The museum provides a thorough overview of the Kitzberg family and August Kitzberg's works, you can also book a guided tour to the landscape of his inspiration.

www.mellini.ee | Tel +372 510 3938

30. A couple of kilometres further, on the other side of the road, you can see the **Lopa outcrop** – the longest cave system in Estonia. In order to find the outcrop, you'll need to locate the meadow of Lopa farm: turn to the left at Atika bus stop and then turn left again at the farm.

31. **Abja Manor** was established in the latter half of the 16th century. The main building is in classicist style and dates back to the first quarter of the 19th century. There is a preserved original cobblestone road and the main house is surrounded by a park. The manor centre is currently privately owned.

32. **Õisu Manor** was established at the turn of the 19th century. The manor house in the early classicist style is imposing with its wide, high entrance stairs with white marble sculptures. The manor complex includes various auxiliary buildings; one of the most interesting is the so-called curved stables. Tel +372 562 40167

The English-style park behind the main building boasts with its rich variety of species.

A hiking trail runs next to the manor, in Õisu Landscape Reserve. The trail leads you along the 20-metre slopes of the picturesque Vidva creek with its several 8-14-metre-high red and yellow sandstone outcrops. Old oak, ash and maple trees from the days of the manor stand on the upper part of the valley slopes. The stairs, bridges and platforms of the hiking trail are recently renovated.



Photo by: Kristiin Elmat



33. **Halliste** has a nostalgic cafeteria worth visiting and having a meal when you are passing through. **St. Anne's Church** has been renovated with local initiative and effort. The original building was probably built during the latter half of the 15th century. Today, it is one of the finest and most modern churches, not least because of the altar painting by Jüri Arrak.



Photo by: Kristiin Elmat

Indu hiking trail leads you along the old road between Halliste Church and Abja Manor.

34. Kulla Confirmation House. The building from 1902 fulfilled its original function up to the establishment of the Republic of Estonia and was later used as a school house. After long, painstaking restoration, it can now be called one of the most beautiful village hall and rural library in Estonia. The simple luxury actually originates from farmers of Mulgimaa around the turn of the 20th century. Farmers used to imitate the style of the manor lords in their homes. Their lifestyle inspired the furnishings, clothes, food, manners and other aspects of the farmers' private life.
Tel +372 436 3175

35. Abja-Paluoja, the capital of the cultural-historic Mulgi area, is located by the picturesque Halliste primeval valley. The visitors are greeted by the **wooden sculpture „Mulgi Man”**. The settlement developed into a small borough of craftsmen and merchants during the 1890s and the development was fast due to the new railway. The sights include the former bank building – now the local post office – and the neoclassicist culture centre. The beautiful **Abja Reservoir** is within comfortable walking distance from the centre. Approx. 2 km from Abja towards Pärnu you can see the buildings of the former Abja linen factory.



36. Mulgi Museum is located in the craftsmen's house of the former Uue-Kariste Manor and describes the daily life of the rural people of Uue-Kariste municipality through objects, photos and memories. Payment for the entrance to the museum is donation-based.
www.facebook.com/mulgikylamuuseum | Tel +372 520 4205

37. When you continue your drive towards Mõisaküla, you can see a sign pointing to the left at Laatre intersection at the 7th kilometre – to **Hendrikhansu outcrop**. After driving 5 km towards Vana-Kariste, another sign directs to the right and after approx. 500 m you will arrive at Hendrikhansu sand outcrop. The total length of the outcrop is 67 m and the height is 6,9 m. Signatures from 1800 have been found on the wall of the outcrop, reminding of sand-carved works of art with their calligraphic characters. The legend has it that the Old Nick himself used to live here and cause trouble.

38. Mõisaküla developed after the building of narrow-gauge railway between Pärnu and Valga in 1895. The town museum provides an overview of the development of the small town. **Mõisaküla Museum** has a permanent exhibition about the history of Mõisaküla from its birth, the local educational and cultural life and sports activities.

As the birth and development of Mõisaküla are so closely related to the railway, a large part of the museum exhibits are railway-related. Among the most valuable items at the museum are the Olympic medals of the Mõisakülaborn Olympic athlete, the heavyweight lifter Arnold Luhaäär.
www.facebook.com/moisakylamuuseum | Tel +372 435 5607

The sights include Maarja-Magdaleena Church and the wooden sculpture „Mulgi Children“.

39. **Barclay de Tolly Mausoleum**

Field Marshal de Tolly, whose final resting place is in Estonia, is one of the most famous people related to Estonia and probably the greatest Russian military leader. The Russian commander who came from a Baltic aristocratic family with Scottish roots played an important part in the Napoleonic wars between 1812 and 1814. Barclay de Tolly's name has been related to Jõgeveste since 1791 when he married Helene Auguste Eleanore von Smitten and became the owner of the Jõgeveste manor.

40. **The ruins of Helme Order Castle** are situated on a steep slope by the Pärnu-Valga road. The castle is thought to have been built in the first half of the 14th century. Situated to the north of castle ruins, the Helme caves have a white Burtneik layer of sandstone walls standing 3 m high. Unfortunately for cave lovers though, some of the better known caves have already collapsed.

41. Spend a pleasant day in water at the newest water and sauna centre in Southern Estonia – **Tõrva water and sauna centre**. Four different saunas await you. There is a disc golf park, as well as skiing, walking, and cycling trails in the beautiful pine forest surrounding the water and sauna centre.

42. **The Estonian National Piano Museum** is located in a unique building – the historic Holdre Manor House. The main building, built in the Jugendstil style with elements of Heimatstyle, was erected around 1910 during the time of Woldemar von Ditmar's ownership of the manor. Previously, the manor center had not been constructed in an representative manner. The architect of the building was Otto Wildau, who is also the author of the projects for the nearby Taagepera and Karksi manor houses.

43. The historical **Uue-Suislepa Manor** is accompanied by the old Suislepa windmill. The Suislepa Museum is located on the fourth floor of the building.

44. The small **pool-spa in Abja** provides possibilities for relaxing for water enthusiasts of all ages. In addition to a pool and a jacuzzi, you can enjoy a Finnish, steam, and a salt sauna. There is a separate mini-pool for children.

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.

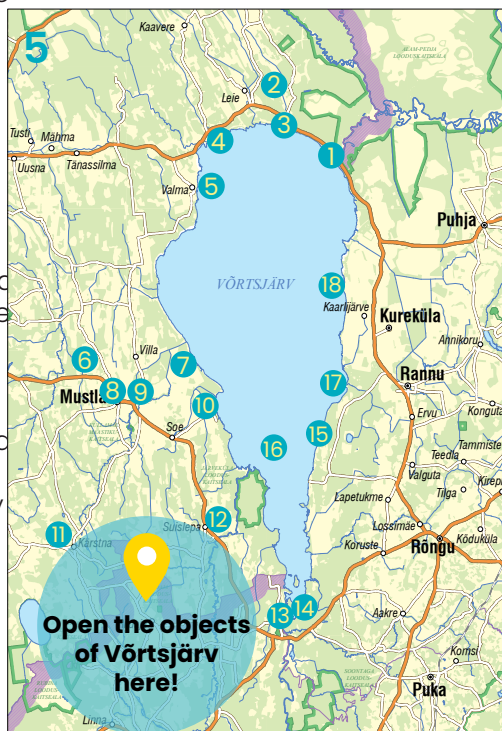
Emajõgi can certainly be crossed here but you can also stop for a moment, have a picnic or simply enjoy the beautiful view of Lake Võrtsjärv.

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.

www.vortsjarv.com | Tel +372 506 6426



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.



Photos by: Kris Süld

There is also a hiking trail in the vicinity.

www.oiusadam.ee/en

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.

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Photos by: Kris Süld

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.

35



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.



Photo by: Kris Süld

Urka memorial stone, commemorating the Great Famine in Suislepa in 1695–1697, is located near the school. www.suislepa.ee | Tel +372 515 3541

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 5656 6926
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.

Signs




















-  hiking trails
-  bicycle trail
-  wheelchair accessible
-  13,5 hiking length km
-  campfire site
-  swimming
-  adventure activities
-  BBQ
-  fishing
-  shower
-  outdoor toilet
-  10 tent camping
-  observation tower
-  forest hut
-  canopy
-  information
-  car park



Photo by: visitestonia x Evolumina



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Walking trails

- 1 Viljandi
- 11 Holstre-Polli
- 29 Paudi
- 35 Kivilõppe
- 36 Võrtsjärv
- 37 Tamme
- 38 Indu
- 39 "Green Rails"
- 40 Sokaoru

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	0,5						
		140					
	1,4						
	2						
	45	5	4	7			
	5						

Recreation in State Forest

- 2 Sakala
- 3 Luite
- 4 Hüpasaare
- 5 Labidakivi
- 6 Lõhavere
- 8 Parika
- 9 Parika järv
- 12 Heimtali

	12				
	4,4				
	3,6				
	0,2				
	2,5				

- 13** Sinialliku
- 14** Loodi
- 15** Loodi põrguorg
- 16** Ruunaraipe
- 17** Öördi
- 18** Läti
- 19** Tõramaa
- 20** Tõramaa
- 21** Kuuraniidu
- 22** Lemmjõe
- 23** Mulgi
- 24** Oksa
- 25** Meiekose
- 26** Ingatsi
- 27** Riisa
- 30** Õisu
- 31** Rutu
- 32** Ruhijärve
- 33** Lilli
- 34** Teringi



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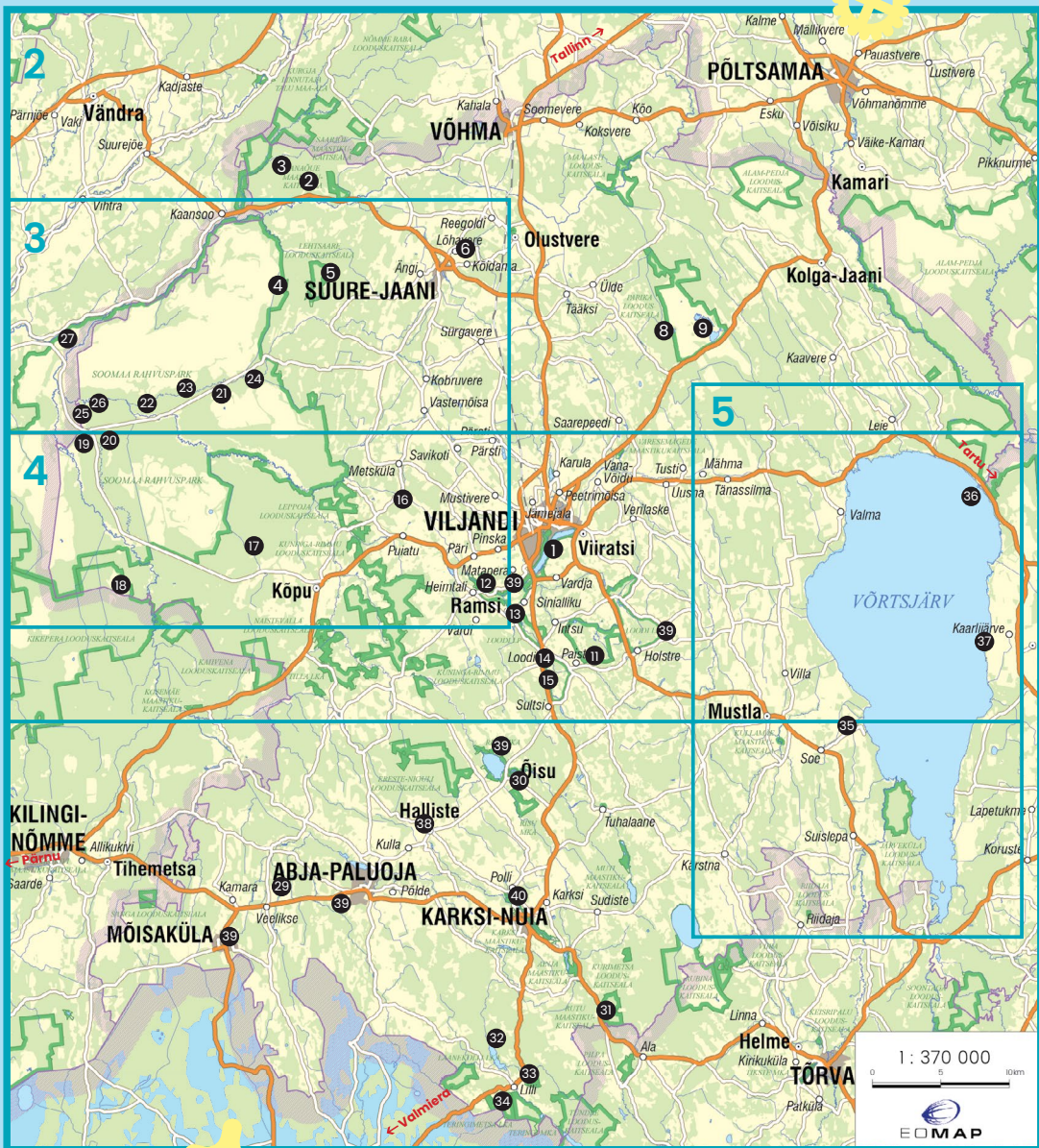
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1 Hiking trail

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Eesti
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Viljandi



Mulgimaa
Arenduskoda



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