

Instructions for hiking in Oulanka National Park:

You may:

- walk, ski, row and canoe
- pick berries and edible mushrooms
- angle and go ice-fishing on lakes and ponds; fishing in the river requires a separate permit
- light a campfire at designated campfire sites, except when a forest fire warning is in effect
- camp at designated sites

You may not:

- leave any litter
- let pets run free
- enter restricted areas or the frontier zone without permission
- take with you or damage plants, the soil or the bedrock
- catch, collect or kill animals, or destroy their nests
- drive a motor vehicle beyond the designated roads
- hunt (only allowed for local people, Hunting Act, Section 8)
- damage any structures

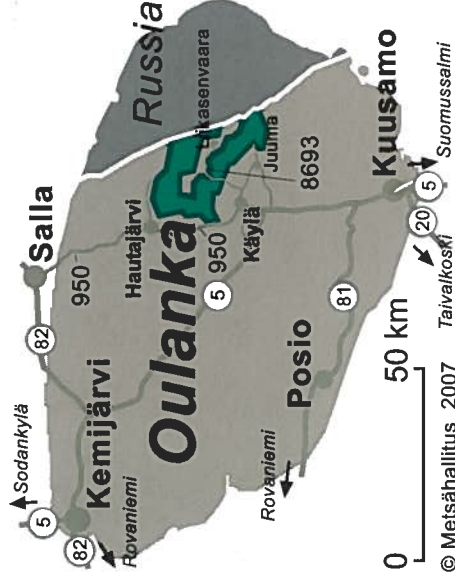
Oulanka National Park has adopted the principle of litter-free hiking, so please take all your litter away with you.



ENGLISH

PIENI KARHUNKIERROS TRAIL

Trail Guide and Map



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PIENI KARHUNKIERROS TRAIL

The Pieni Karhunkierros (Little Bear's Trail) hiking trail takes the visitor amidst the rugged scenery and swiftly flowing streams of Oulanka National Park. For most of the way, the trail follows the River Kitkajoki, whose waters flow between steep cliffs, accelerated by the force of strong currents and rapids. Kitkajoki is a fast and, in places, wild river, but similar to the River Oulankajoki, it calms down after the largest rapids. Issuing from Lake Kitkajärvi, the River Kitkajoki meets the River Oulankajoki near the frontier zone. Together they flow towards Russia and into Paanajärvi, a deep and long lake situated in a national park carrying the same name.

The best thing about the trail is the spectacular views, which make it an excellent scenic trail. Furthermore, those who know a thing or two about nature can expect to encounter some unique species. In May and early June a sharp-eyed hiker can admire the emblem plant of Oulanka National Park, the protected calypso, along the trail. The area is also home to such rarities as the mountain avens, alpine saxifrage, alpine mouse-ear and green spleenwort. There may even be strawberries in the forest to enjoy!

HIKING TRAIL INFORMATION

Trail markings: green paint marks

Length of the trail: 12 km

Time required: one day (4 to 9 hours)

Facilities: open wilderness and day-trip hut, lean-to shelter, campfire and camping sites

Please note: there are hanging bridges and steps along the trail

Getting there: by bus from the centre of Kuusamo to Juuma, a parking area

TRAIL GUIDE

An ideal day-trip destination, Pieni Karhunkierros starts at the village of Juuma, 45 km north of the centre of Kuusamo. An information board at the starting point introduces the trail on a map and provides practical advice for hikers. The beginning and end of the trail are the same, but the rest of the way is a circle trail. The facilities along the trail offer a great setting for resting and eating. The differences in altitude and various land forms make the trail a challenge, but earth steps, bridges and duckboards have been constructed to assist you.

2. Aallokkokoski Rapids



The almost one-kilometre-long Aallokkokoski Rapids consist of a series of successive rapids where the water flows swiftly downwards. The drop and the structure of the river bottom create foam, waves and swirls in the rapids. No wonder then that the wildly gushing Aallokkokoski Rapids are favoured by river-rafting enthusiasts.

3. Jyrävä Falls

The Jyrävä Falls are the most impressive rapids along the trail. The River Kitkajoki is squeezed between two rock walls and drops down as a majestic 9-metre waterfall with a loud roar. River rafting is not allowed here – it would be too dangerous.

4. Siilastupa Wilderness Hut

Siilastupa was constructed in 1940 as a fishing hut for General Hjalmar Fridolf Siilasvuo, who had distinguished himself in the Winter War between Finland and Russia. His comrades in arms squared the logs on the Russian side during the period of peace between the Winter War and the Continuation War. However, General Siilasvuo never got to see the hut, which is situated in the rugged landscape of the Jyrävä Falls. The hut has been repaired over the years after it began to be used more often for tourism purposes. Most of it has been retained in its original condition. It currently serves as an open wilderness hut for 12 people.



Starting point • Niskakoski Rapids • Myllykoski Rapids

1,5 km

The first section of the trail is characterised by undulating, partly rocky and dryish pine-dominated heath forest. The first hanging bridge crosses the Niskakoski Rapids. The section ends at the thunder of the Myllykoski Rapids. There is a renovated mill building by the rapids.

1. Myllykoski Rapids

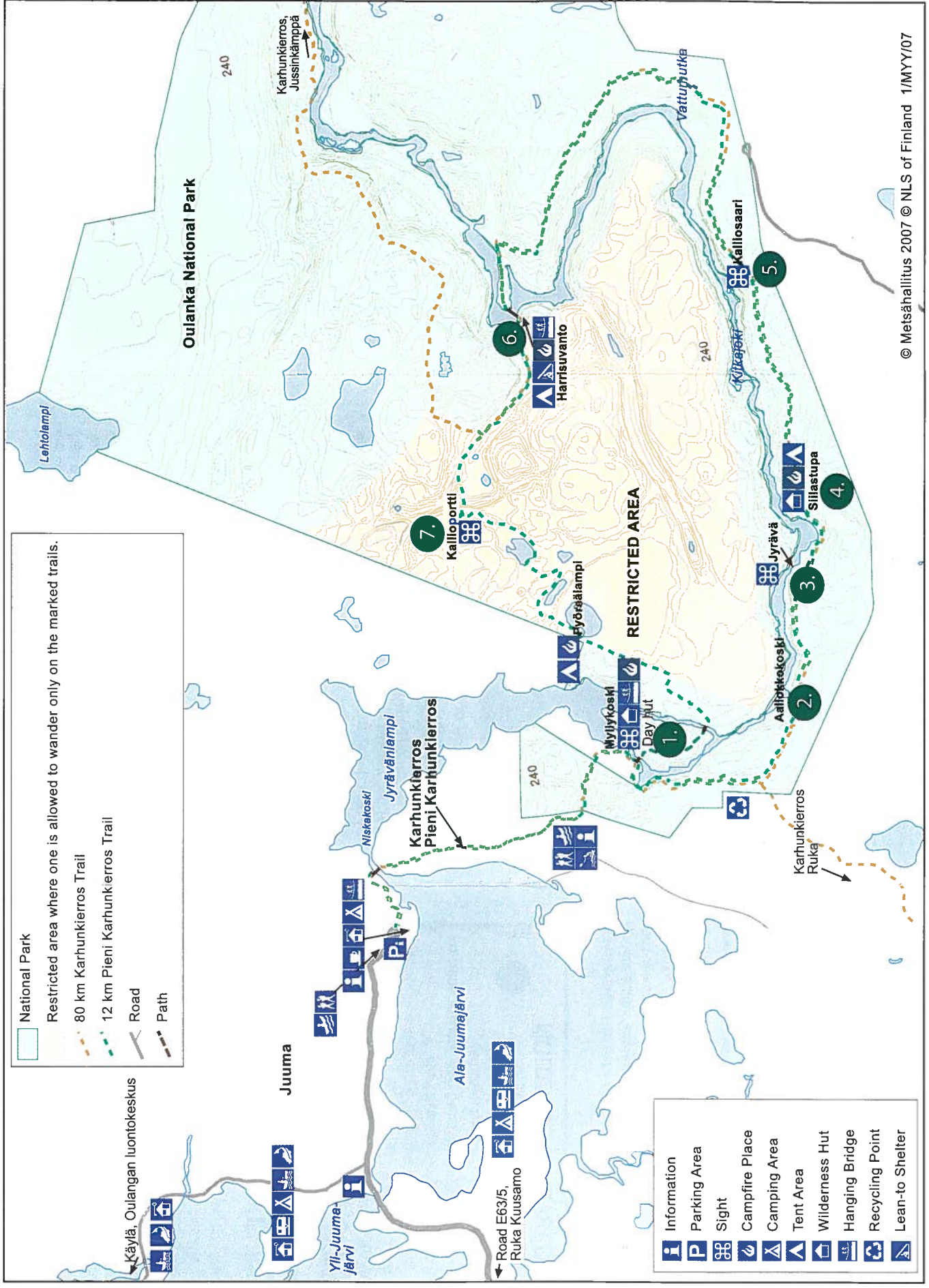


The strong flow of the Myllykoski Rapids encouraged the villagers of Juuma and Säkkiälä to build a mill and found a cooperative in 1926. The millstones, powered by the water, mainly ground barley, but also rye every once in a while. Corn was transported to the mill by horse during the winter and by boat during the summer. However, because the mill was difficult to reach, the operations ended in 1949 when the last batch of flour was ground. In the early 2000s the mill cottage was renovated to serve day-trip visitors. Grinding is also carried out occasionally, during presentations arranged in the summertime.

• Myllykoski Rapids • Aallokkokoski Rapids • Jyrävä Falls

2 km

By the mill cottage there are steepish steps leading to the trail that branches off at the Myllykoski hanging bridge. Don't cross the bridge yet; head for the Aallokkokoski Rapids instead. At this point the terrain changes to undulating, esker-like, sparsely wooded pine heath. The wide trail is easy to walk on. At the start of the duckboards you can admire the long, foaming Aallokkokoski Rapids. The trail closely follows the river, taking you to the majestic Jyrävä Falls.



National Park
 Restricted area where one is allowed to wander only on the marked trails.
 80 km Karhunkierros Trail
 12 km Pieni Karhunkierros Trail
 Road
 Path

- Information
- Parking Area
- Sight
- Campfire Place
- Camping Area
- Tent Area
- Wilderness Hut
- Hanging Bridge
- Recycling Point
- Lean-to Shelter

• Jyrävä Falls • Kalliosaari Island • Harrisuvanto Pool • Kallioportti

4,5 km

From the Siilastupa hut the trail follows the riverside on a pine heath-dominated ridge, with stunning cliff scenery guiding your way. As you descend all the way to the river's surface, to Harrisuvanto Pool, the scenery takes on a new appearance. After the hanging bridge – past the lean-to shelter – you dive into a more sheltered forest, and once on the duckboards even the climate changes. A little past Harrisuvanto Pool the Pieni Karhunkierros Trail is joined by the Karhunkierros Trail. The Kallioportti area is almost visible, but the most physically challenging section is still ahead: a nearly 100-metre climb up the steps to the cliff top. After the climb you'll be rewarded with spectacular views.

5. Kalliosaari Island



Sitting in the middle of the river, Kalliosaari Island is the result of long-term erosion. Originally, the island was much larger. Over the course of tens of thousands of years, rain and flowing water have worn down the parts made up of softer rock material. What remains today is a mass of rock consisting of harder material, leaving more room for the river to flow. In this part of the trail you have a view of the up to 80-metre-deep Kikkajoki Canyon. The walls of the canyon are made livelier by talus, i.e. the accumulation of rock fragments. As a result of temperature fluctuations, the boulders break off the walls and tumble down the slopes. The water inside the rock wall expands when it freezes, thereby breaking pieces off the wall.

6. Harrisuvanto Pool



Arriving at Harrisuvanto Pool, the River Kikkajoki calms down. The grayling, which is a salmonoid fish, has lent its name to the place ('harri' = grayling). The pool has been known as a breeding ground of graylings since the early days. The calm surface of the water may also be broken by jumping trout. You cross the river using a nearly 50-metre-long hanging bridge. Even though these bridges seem rickety, their structure makes them safe – they are the strongest bridges in the world.

7. Kallioportti Lookout Point



The stunning views from Kallioportti open up from the edge of a cliff. The Juuma gorges with their valuable and unique vegetation extend below you. The various surface forms of the cliff and the habitats facing in different directions provide a rich environment for plants. Birds nest in the holes and cracks of the cliff. The area is home to a large number of species. There are rare relic species that have survived in the favourable conditions of the gorges as remnants of an earlier population with wider distribution. Oulanka National Park is thus a real treasure trove of various species! When exploring this area, please remember to keep to the marked trails to ensure the survival of the rare species and their habitats.

1. Myllykoski Rapids

2. Aallokkoski Rapids

3. Jyrävä Falls

4. Siilastupa Wilderness Hut

5. Kalliosaari Island

6. Harrisuvanto Pool

7. Kallioportti Lookout Point

• Kallioportti • Lake Pyöreälampi • Myllykoski Rapids

2,5 km

From Kallioportti the trail continues through paludified ponds – at times along duckboards and at times on dry land. By Lake Pyöreälampi there is a campfire site and an opportunity for camping. The terrain in this section of the trail is varied, but never steep. Here the trail passes through the restricted area of the Juuma gorges, so it is very important that you stay on the marked trail. Finally you arrive at the Myllykoski hanging bridge via Putaansaari – and this time you should cross the bridge. The way back to where you started is already familiar.

