



Punkaharju Nature Reserve

- Location: Savonlinna
- Total area: 656 ha
- Established: 1991



The area is managed by Metsähallitus

- Lake Saimaa Nature and Museum Centre, Riihisaari 57130 Savonlinna, tel. +358 (0)206 39 5929 saimaa@metsa.fi
- nationalparks.fi/punkaharju

Nature reserve

Punkaharju

The blue waters of Lake Saimaa are visible through the rare ridge side pines that line the road running along the top of this narrow esker. People have been coming to see the natural beauty of Punkaharju since the early 1800s. Finnish literary greats, such as J.L. Runeberg and Zachris Topelius, were fascinated by the area. A nature reserve was later established to nurture the cultural landscape of Punkaharju. In addition to the maintained esker landscapes, some areas have been left in their natural state.

From museum to trail

Punkaharju has a large network of trails, and its varied surfaces provide outstanding outdoor

recreation terrain throughout the year. For example, the trails in the nature reserve are connected to the trails in Laukansaari Research Park. Some of them are wide sandy paths or roads that are in good condition and also suitable for wheelchairs. During the winter, the area has ski tracks and snowshoeing trails. The many destinations, such as museums and art exhibitions, offer even more to see and the accommodation, programme and restaurant services located inside and around the nature reserve are open all year round.

The esker is an old travel route

The narrow Punkaharju esker separates two large basins of Lake Saimaa: the clear water of Puruvesi and the rugged and rocky Pihlajavesi. The esker is an old travel route that was used

by animals and people – from traders to military battalions. The Russians built the first road in the 1700s, and it ran right along the top of the dangerously narrow ridge. A section of the original unpaved esker top road – lined with rock walls – has been preserved on the southern side of Hotel Punkaharju. This can be explored on foot. The hotel, previously known as Punkaharjun Valtionhotelli, was originally built as a forest ranger's cabin. Today this is Finland's oldest hotel still in operation. If you're interested in the history of the esker, we recommend a visit to Cape Kuikonniemi to see the restored Salpa-Line trenches.

Enjoy the outdoors while protecting nature

- Respect nature and take others in the area into consideration.
- Pets are welcome in the area as long as they are kept on a leash at all times.
- This is a litter-free hiking area: everything that you carry in, you can also carry out!
- There are no campfire sites in the nature reserve, so open fires are prohibited.
- Hiking, skiing and use of watercraft are permitted in the area (although joy riding on water scooters or similar is forbidden).
- Biking is permitted on the designated trails.
- You can pick berries and mushrooms, but please leave the rocks and plants alone.
- Hook and line fishing and ice fishing are permitted according to the Fishing Act. For lure fishing, you need to pay the fisheries management fee and possibly obtain an angling permit.

www.nationalparks.fi/punkaharju
> Rules and regulations

Emergency number 112

Note that there are some areas in the park without signal.



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PHOTOS: SAARA LAVI AND JUSSI SILVENNOINEN

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