



VisitKarelia

The Soul of Finland

Destination presentation of North Karelia, Lakeland Finland

VisitKarelia
BY BUSINESS JOENSUU

Welcome to Lakeland Finland



Lakeland
The Heart of Finland

The **largest Lakeland district in Europe**, Finnish Lakeland, is a blue labyrinth of lakes, islands, rivers and canals, interspersed with forests and ridges. Finland has **188 000 lakes** and most of them are situated in the heart of Finland.

Reasons to visit Lakeland Finland:

- The land of the 1000 lakes
- Finnish national landscape
- Home of the sauna
- Have a holiday like the Finns do



How to get here?

Flights

Direct flights from Helsinki (HEL) to Joensuu (JOE)
Aircraft ATR, 72 seats (2+2), operated by Finnair
Flight time: 65 minutes

- HEL – JOE: Mon 1 flight, Tue-Fri and Sun 2 flights
- JOE – HEL: Mon - Fri 2 flights, Sun 1 flight
- No flights on Saturdays

Trains

Daily 5-7 direct trains, operated by Finnish Railways (VR)
Travel time from Helsinki: 4 hours 35 minutes
Cabin classes: Eko, Extra relaxed class and Extra calm

Travelling by car

Driving time Helsinki – Joensuu: 5 hours (430 km)
Highway 5 via Lahti or Highway 6 via Lappeenranta

Very easy to drive, low traffic, good maintenance



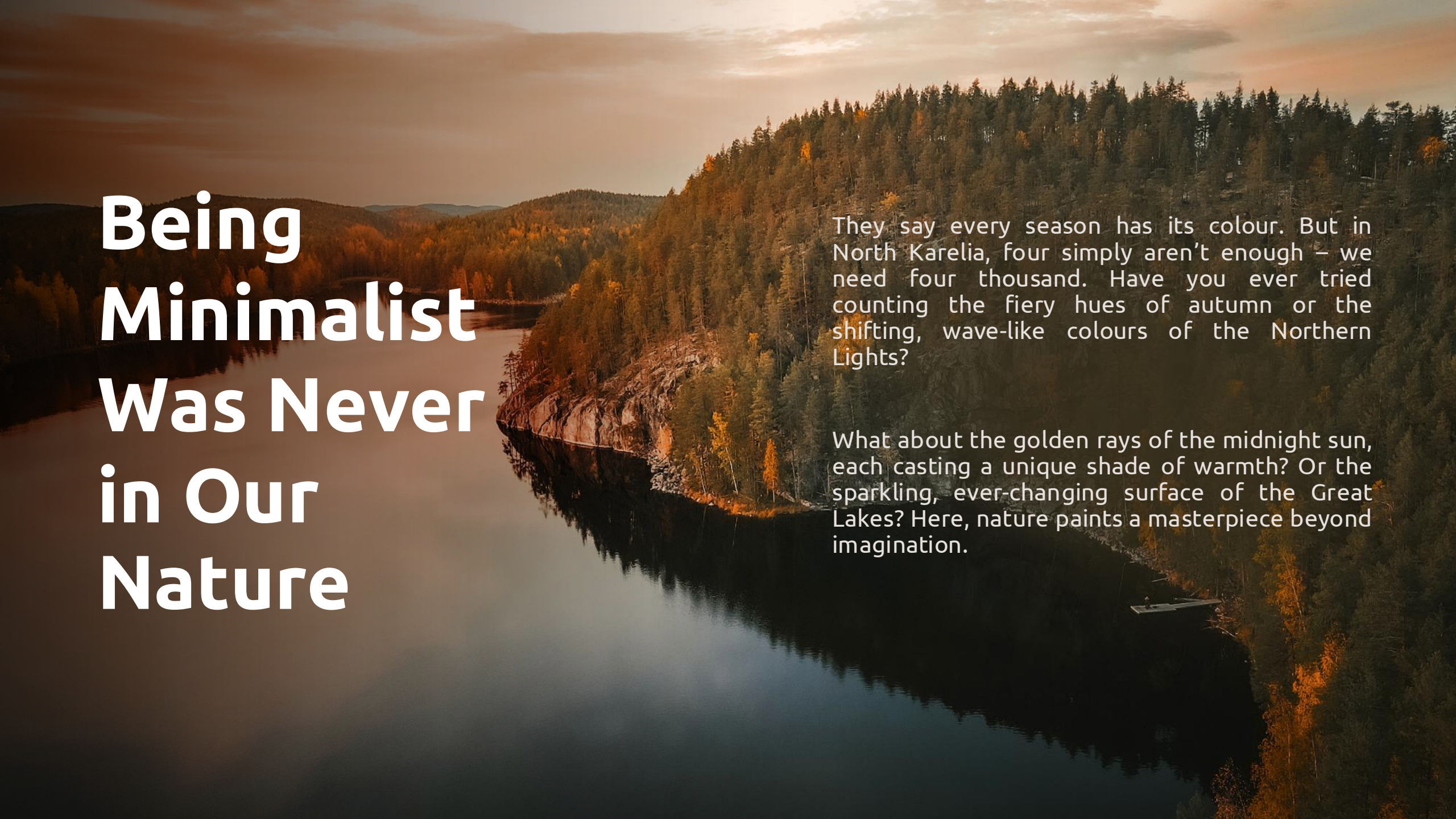
Welcome to North Karelia, Lakeland Finland

- North Karelia is **part of Europe's largest lake district and Finland's easternmost county.**
- It is home to **4 national parks** and one of **Finland's national landscapes**: Koli national park.
- **UNESCO's Biosphere Reserve**

Reasons to visit North Karelia:

- Colourful and distinct seasons
- Land of stories
- Karelian heritage, traditions and hospitality
- Finnish luxury: saunas & lakeside holidays
- Unique Karelian culture





Being Minimalist Was Never in Our Nature

They say every season has its colour. But in North Karelia, four simply aren't enough – we need four thousand. Have you ever tried counting the fiery hues of autumn or the shifting, wave-like colours of the Northern Lights?

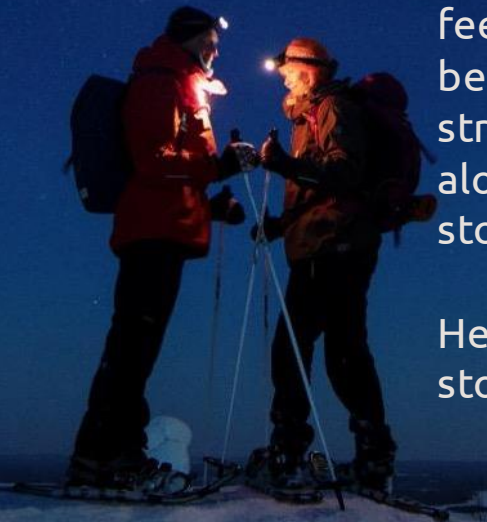
What about the golden rays of the midnight sun, each casting a unique shade of warmth? Or the sparkling, ever-changing surface of the Great Lakes? Here, nature paints a masterpiece beyond imagination.

This is Where The Story Begins

North Karelia is more than just a tale – it's a collection of stories, both ancient and new. It is the birthplace of the Finns, the land where the timeless story of our nation began.

You can hear these stories echoing in the rugged frontiers and resonating in the strings of the kantele. They thunder beneath your feet and beat within the steadfast heart of the bedrock. They sing through the voices of strong Karelian women and guide your steps along the paths once traveled by ancient storytellers.

Here, every moment becomes part of the story. Come and discover it for yourself.



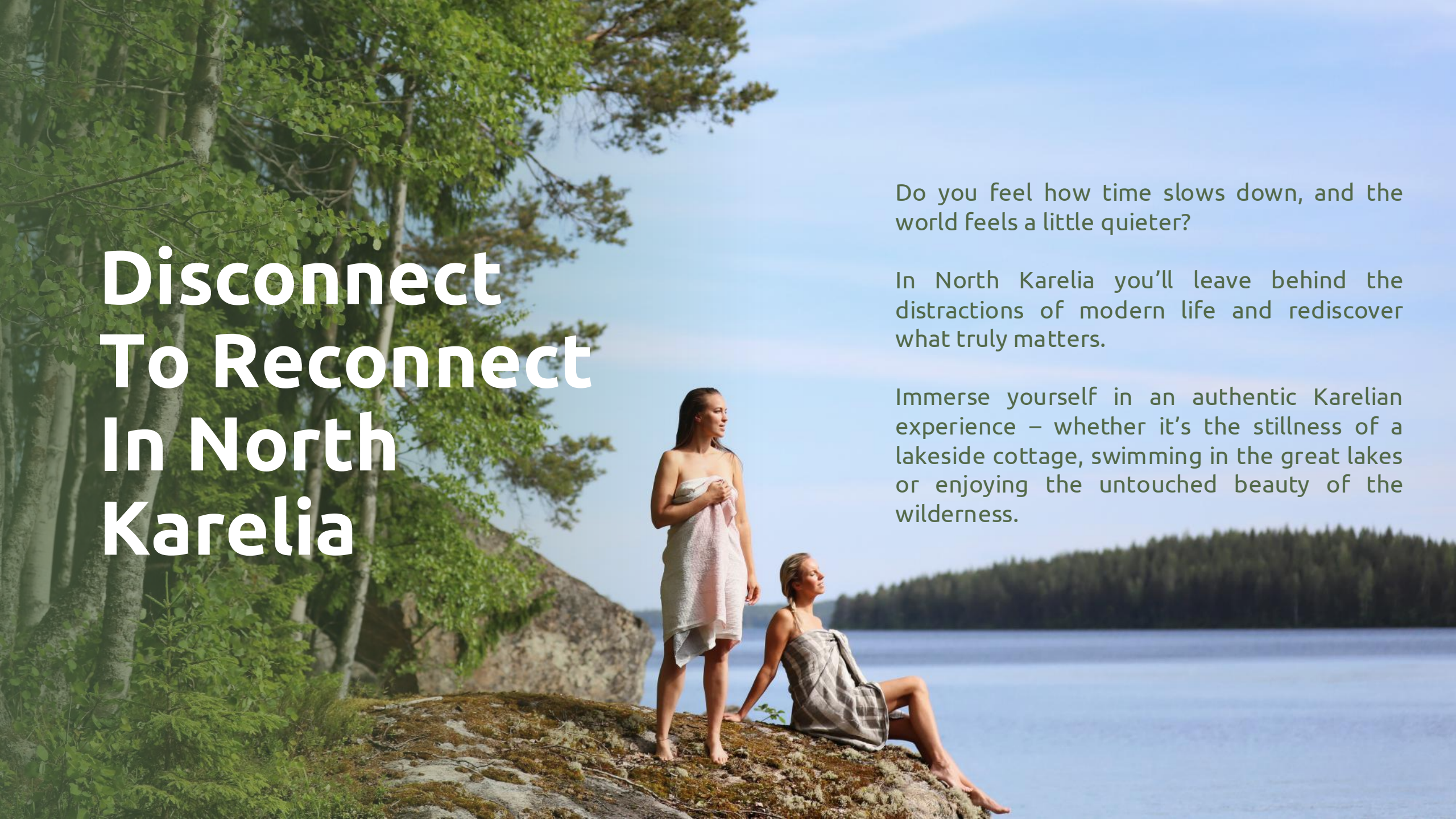
Meet the Friendliest People Of The World's Happiest Country

In North Karelia, hospitality is not just a gesture, but a way of life. Whether you're exploring Karelian heritage or authentic culture with locals, or tasting generations-old recipes, you'll feel the warmth of Karelian hospitality.

Here every welcome is heartfelt – and every table filled with tradition. Food is at the heart of Karelian culture, from the iconic karjalanpiirakka (Karelian pastries) to tasty stews.

Sharing a meal here isn't just about eating – it's about connecting, celebrating, and savoring the flavors of the region.



A scenic landscape photograph of two women on a mossy rock by a lake. One woman stands wrapped in a pink towel, looking out at the water. The other sits wrapped in a grey towel, looking up at the sky. The background features a calm lake, a dense forest on the opposite shore, and a clear blue sky. The foreground is filled with lush green trees on the left.

Disconnect To Reconnect In North Karelia

Do you feel how time slows down, and the world feels a little quieter?

In North Karelia you'll leave behind the distractions of modern life and rediscover what truly matters.

Immerse yourself in an authentic Karelian experience – whether it's the stillness of a lakeside cottage, swimming in the great lakes or enjoying the untouched beauty of the wilderness.

Nothing Quite Like a Karelian Kind

In North Karelia, it's the kind people who leave the biggest impression. Warm, welcoming, and wonderfully original, Karelians have a spirit all their own. We'll greet you with kindness, share stories as rich as our landscapes, and invite you to experience traditions that have stood the test of time. Come meet the people of North Karelia – because there's truly nothing quite like a Karelian kind!



Places of interest



Koli National Park
The most iconic landscape of Finland.



Kolovesi National Park
Habitat of rare Saimaa ringed seal & ancient rock paintings.



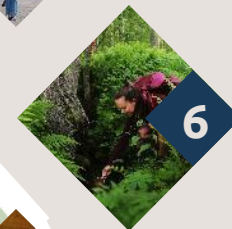
Bomba, the Karelian Village
Authentic Karelian architecture.



Patvinsuo National Park
Largest national park in southern Finland & habitat of bears.



Valamo and Lintula
Iconic Orthodox monasteries.



Petkeljärvi National Park
Rare ice age ridges and WW2 battle locations.



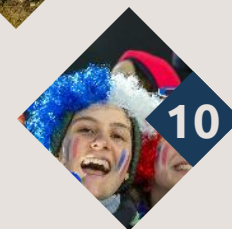
Parppeinvaara Rune Singer's Village
Traditional Karelian hilltop village with museum and a restaurant.



Ruunaa rapids
The best white water rafting location in Finland.



Outokumpu Old Mine
One of a kind unique and historic mining museum.

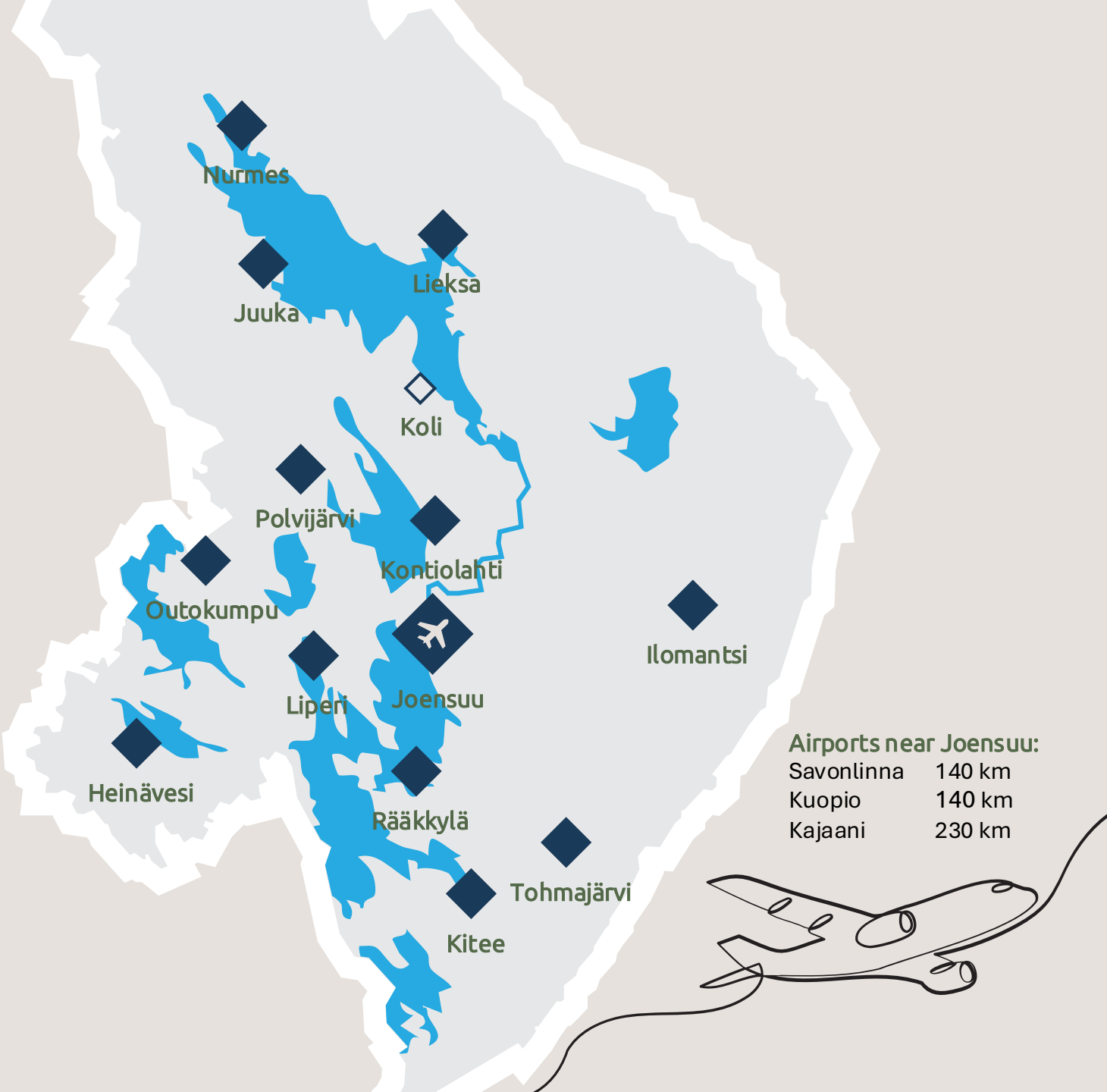


Kontiolahti Biathlon Stadium
Biathlon World Cup.

Accommodation capacity

Joensuu 1960 Original Sokos Hotel Kimmel, Boutique Hotel Lietsu	Lieksa 1212 Break Sokos Hotel Koli, Break Sokos Hotel Koli Kylä, Tarina-aho	Kontiolahti 472 Venejoen Piilo, Sampon Mökit
Nurmes 1286 Break Sokos Bomba, Hyvärilä, Guesthouse Pihljapuu, Laitalan Lomat	Liperi 230 Ollilan Tupa, Leveälähti Cottages	Kitee 820 Ruoke Holiday Village, Karjalan Helmi
Outokumpu 40 Kyykerin Kartano	Ilomantsi 350 Guesthouses Mantan Majatalo, Möhkön Rajakartano, Kuuksenkaari	Heinävesi 222 Valamo Monastery, Police jail cell
Juuka 90 Koli Freetime	Polvijärvi 92 Saariä Farm Accommodation	Tohmajärvi 159 Villa Valkea, Itärajan helmi
Rääkkylä 118 Villa Ruusula, Koivuniemi Camping, Paksuniemi, Karelia Cottages	7000 Total amount of beds	

Beds in registered accommodation (more than 20 beds): **6253**
Beds in unregistered accommodation (less than 20 beds): **798**



Key figures of North Karelia



532,000*
overnights in 2025
(predicted)



Our key source markets:
DACH, Benelux
UK, France, Spain and Italy

Objective:

1 M

Overnights by 2030



Source markets
92 % domestic
8 % international

112€

**Average room rate per
room per night in 2025**
(vs Lapland 179 € per room per night)



7000
total bed capacity

TOP 10

International Markets
Germany, Thailand, Austria,
Sweden, The Netherlands, France,
Switzerland, Italy, UK, Estonia



34 M€
Accommodation Income in 2025*
(predicted)

53% of Europeans stay between

May-Sep

Recognitions & partners we work with

- Venejoen Piilo – Best accommodation of the year 2025 (Scandinavian Outdoor Group)
- Karhun Talo Pilgrimage around Lake Pielinen – Best outdoor product for individuals 2025 (Scandinavian Outdoor Group)
- Koli – Outdoor travel destination of the year 2023 (Scandinavian Outdoor Group)
- Break Sokos Hotel Bomba – best hotel in Finland 2024 (Finnish Travel Gala)
- Korvenkota smoke sauna – best sauna in Finland 2024 (influencer award)
- Äksyt Ämmät foodie tour - best food tourism product 2015 (Hungry for Finland competition)
- Koli - destination of the year 2021 (Association of Finnish Travel Industry)
- Koli - domestic destination of the year 2024 (MeNaiset, Finland's largest women's weekly magazine)
- Särkiselkä - best beach in Finland 2022 (MeNaiset, Finland's largest women's weekly magazine)
- North Karelia UNESCO biosphere reserve since 1992

BOSCOLO
Emozioni e Viaggi che valgono davvero

ZONISTA
Destination Travel Experts

 **Discover**
the World

 **GO EAST**

 **Behringer**
TOURISTIK

 **BTO**

 **Norway**
ProTravel

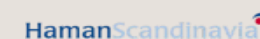
 **Feelgood**

 **fjordkind**
FAMILIEN REISEN

 **BALTIC**
JEWELLERIES

 **Nord**

 **KUONI**
TUMLARE

 **HamanScandinavia**

 **fins-tours sa**
solutions

 **TARANDRO**

 **Fonte Gaia Tour**
TRAVEL LAB

 **MIKI TRAVEL**

 **NORDIC DELIGHTS**
RENOVE THE SCANDINAVIAN
PARTY FROM THE GROUND

Sustainability

Responsibility and sustainable development are key themes in Finland's tourism strategy and also one of the key goals in tourism development in North Karelia.

Many of our companies have achieved Sustainable Travel Finland certificate or are on their way to achieve one. You will find STF certified companies marked with Sustainable Travel Finland label in VisitKarelia's product manual.

For more information, please visit:
[Stories of Sustainability in North Karelia](#) | [VisitKarelia](#)



Biosphere Reserve

North Karelia is home to **one of the two UNESCO designated biosphere reserves in Finland**.

Established in 1992, it is the **first biosphere area in Finland** to be acknowledged in UNESCO's the Man and the Biosphere programme of 784 (2025) biospheres worldwide.

Biosphere reserves are **learning sites for sustainable development**, whose mission is to promote the conservation of biodiversity and cultural heritage, as well as the sustainable development of livelihoods through the active participation of local communities.

Great places to experience the nature of North Karelia Biosphere Reserve include **Koli, Patvinsuo and Petkeljärvi National Parks; Ruunaa Hiking area** or some of the nature reserves, like **Koivusuo or Kesonsuo**.

Biosphere sustainable development partnership network enhances opportunities for regional sustainable development. Partners set their own sustainable development goals and commit to them. You will find biosphere partners marked with below logo in VisitKarelia's product manual.



Joensuu airport



Population of North Karelia: 162,000

Operation: year round

Flight time from Helsinki: 65 mins
(distance by ground: 440 km)

Joensuu airport is part of Finavia network

- Flexibility with slots and arrangements

Ground handler: Joen Service Oy.

Joensuu is uniquely positioned in the heart of North Karelia allowing easy access to all its and Lakeland destinations.



Best time to visit North Karelia



CHANCES
OF AURORA



SNOW
COVER



DAY LIGHT
HOURS



ICE
SWIMMING



WILD
SWIMMING



HIKING &
BIKING



FISHING &
FORAGING



SNOWMOB.
& HUSKIES



PRICE vs.
AVERAGE



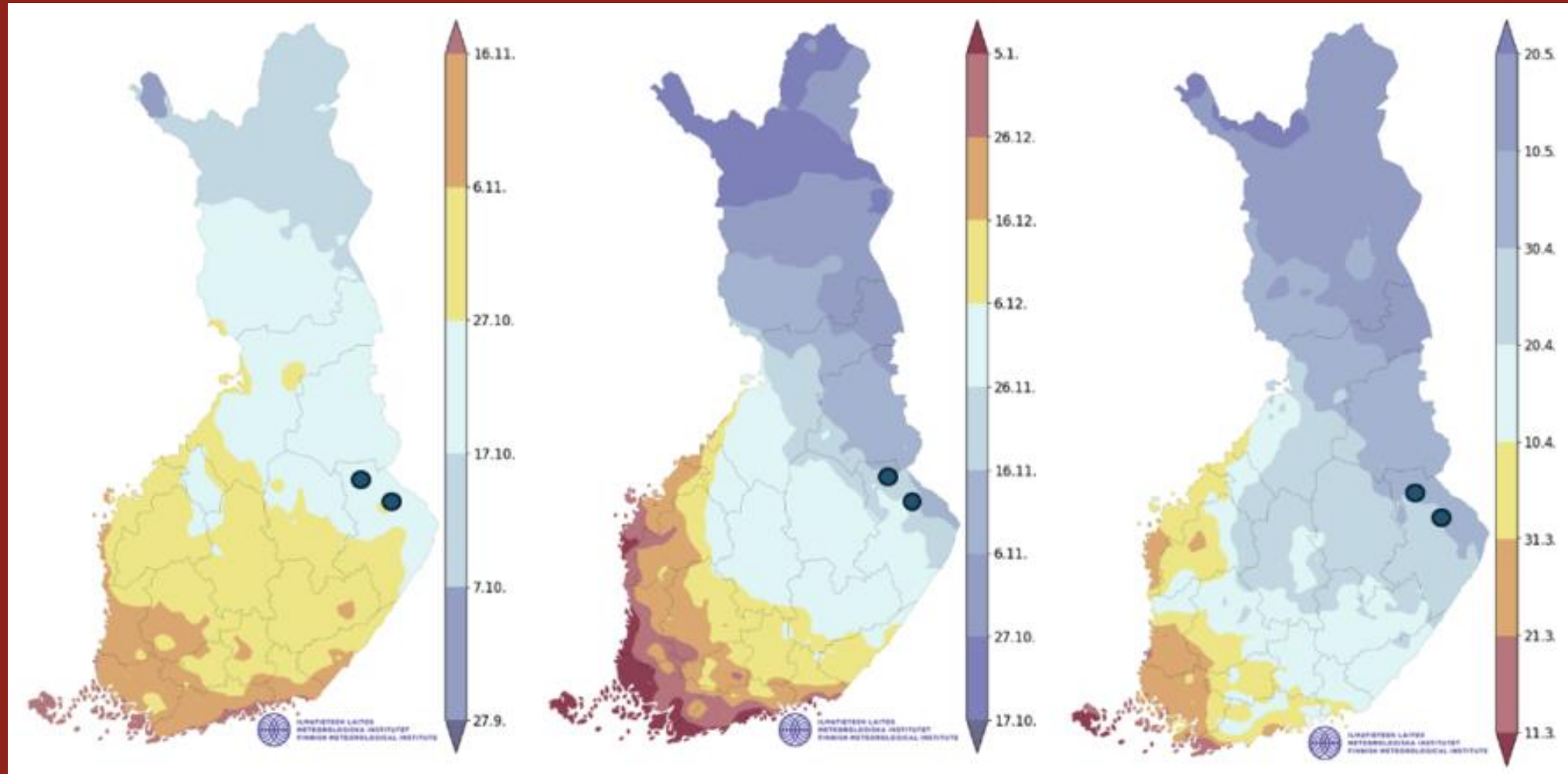
CROWDS &
SEASON

JANUARY	Good	Great	5 -7 hrs	Yes	N/A	Snow		Great	Average	Low
FEBRUARY	Good	Great	8-10 hrs	Yes	N/A	Snow		Great	Average	Low
MARCH	Good	Good	10-13 hrs	Yes	N/A	Snow		Great	Average	Low
APRIL	N/A	Slight	13-16 hrs	Yes	N/A	Ground		Maybe	Lower	Low
MAY	N/A	N/A	17-19 hrs	N/A	Good	Ground		N/A	Lower	Shoulder
JUNE	N/A	N/A	19-20 hrs	N/A	Great	Ground		N/A	Higher	High
JULY	N/A	N/A	17-20 hrs	N/A	Great	Ground		N/A	Higher	High
AUGUST	Great	N/A	14-18 hrs	N/A	Great	Ground		N/A	Lower	High
SEPTEMBER	Great	N/A	12-14 hrs	Maybe	Good	Ground		N/A	Average	Shoulder
OCTOBER	Good	Slight	9-12 hrs	Yes	N/A	Ground		N/A	Average	Shoulder
NOVEMBER	Good	Good	6-8 hrs	Yes	N/A	Snow		N/A	Lower	Low
DECEMBER	Good	Great	4-5 hrs	Yes	N/A	Snow		Great	Lower	Low

North Karelia region is a snow-proof destination



North Karelia is known for its distinct four seasons and reliable winter snow. The upper parts of North Karelia have about the same amount of snow as Rovaniemi. See the snow cover map for the Bomba and Koli destinations, based on 30-year historical data.



Typical date for first snow cover

Starting date of permanent snow cover

Ending date of permanent snow cover

8

reasons to visit North Karelia



Experience
snowfilled winter
in Koli & Bomba
(pages 12-13)



Stay in unique
accommodation
(pages 16-17 and 24)



Experience local
Karelian culture
(pages 7, 9, 11,
13, 17, 19)



Cruise through the
Great Lakes of
North Karelia
(pages 8-9)



Holiday with a
purpose to conserve
the Saimaa seal
(pages 14-15)



Taste, forage and
learn to make
local delicacies
(pages 18-19
and 21)



Live like a local
and enjoy sauna &
'mökki' by a lake
(pages 22-23)



Join one of our
many events
(pages 26-27)



LAVITA IBU WORLD CUP BIATHLON 2026/2027

KONTIOLAHTI

26.-29.11.2026



The next LaVita IBU World Cups Biathlon

in Kontiolahti, Finland:

26.-29.11.2026

7.-12.12.2027

Elämys DMC offers travel packages to World Cup.

www.kontiolahtibiathlon.com

We're Here to help you

We at North **Karelia's destination marketing organisation VisitKarelia** are here to help you as a travel trade with all things North Karelian. Whether you are searching for the best attractions, pre-planned routes or hidden highlights, our team can help you find a suitable solution to your customers.

If you need help with **product development, supplier contacts or marketing material**, do not hesitate to get in touch. We also organise **joint marketing campaigns** and organise **fam trips**.

Come and experience the Soul of Finland in Finnish Lakeland!

Contact us at

- visitkarelia@businessjoensuu.fi
- or by telephone: +358 010 419 8016



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**Thank you & we look
forward to hearing from
you soon!**

VisitKarelia