

8. Valtionhotelli (State hotel)

Punkaharju's Valtionhotelli is the oldest lodging house in Finland and hence, its history is full of interesting details. The buildings represent the versatile and rich Finnish architecture of wooden constructions.

The oldest part of the hotel was built in 1845 as a forest warden's house where modest lodging facilities were also provided for tourists. The architecture, designed by superintendent Ernst Bernhard Lohrmann, represents one of the first Swiss chalet-style buildings in Finland. In 1879 the forest warden's house was extended by adding an annex of ten guest rooms. After the extension the building was used as a lodging house, and the forest warden moved to a separate residence. In 1893 the number of guest rooms was increased by another ten and, when a kitchen wing was added in 1899, the building became much as it is today.

The hotel was completely renovated during 1978-1979, and the restoration was one of the most demanding ones ever performed in Finland in the field of wooden construction architecture. Punkaharju's Valtionhotelli can be said to be a monument to Finland's earliest endeavours in conservation, forest management, tourism and different types of recreational activities.

9. Empress's Villa

The year 1898 was a year of consecutive extensions and rapid growth at the hotel. A separate annex building, the Empress's Villa, also called "Villa Punkasyrjä" in old documents, was built less than 200 metres from the main hotel. There is no knowledge of how and why the Villa got its name, and neither is there any proof to show that an empress was accommodated there. The wooden building contains merely guest rooms and its architecture is very different from the hotel building. The style indicates the revival of Neo Renaissance and has some resemblance to some villas built at the end of 19th century on the Karelian Isthmus. The Empress's Villa was repaired in connection with the renovation of the Valtionhotelli completed in 1979.

10. Stone Boundaries

The beauty of Punkaharju was discovered early on. In 1803 Tsar Alexander I urged that the esker forests be protected. Punkaharju was submitted to the state in 1840 and since then the esker has been fostered as Finnish national landscape. After many eventful phases the stone boundaries of the Punkaharju Crown Park were finally constructed. A sturdy stone wall was built to separate the state land from private land. Piles of stones are still left of this construction, locally called "the Crown fence". The stone piles are protected by the National Board of Antiquities and as such, they will be preserved.

11. Metla Punkaharju Research Unit

Near to the esker area there is also the Research Unit facilities of the Finnish Forest Research Institute (Metla). Metla is an independent research institute under the auspices of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. It provides information on forest ecosystems, various forms of forest use as well as forestry and timber trade and industry.

Metla Punkaharju Research Unit is specialized in research into forest genetics and forest improvement. The Punkaharju research area was established in 1924. The area comprises 1850 hectares of research forests and 720 ha of nature conservation areas.

We hope that you have enjoyed your visit to Punkaharju and have learnt something of its past and present. Thank you for coming and we hope to see you again.

METLA

PUNKAHARJU

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METLA

PUNKAHARJU RESEARCH PARK AND NATURE CONSERVATION AREA

CULTURE TRAIL

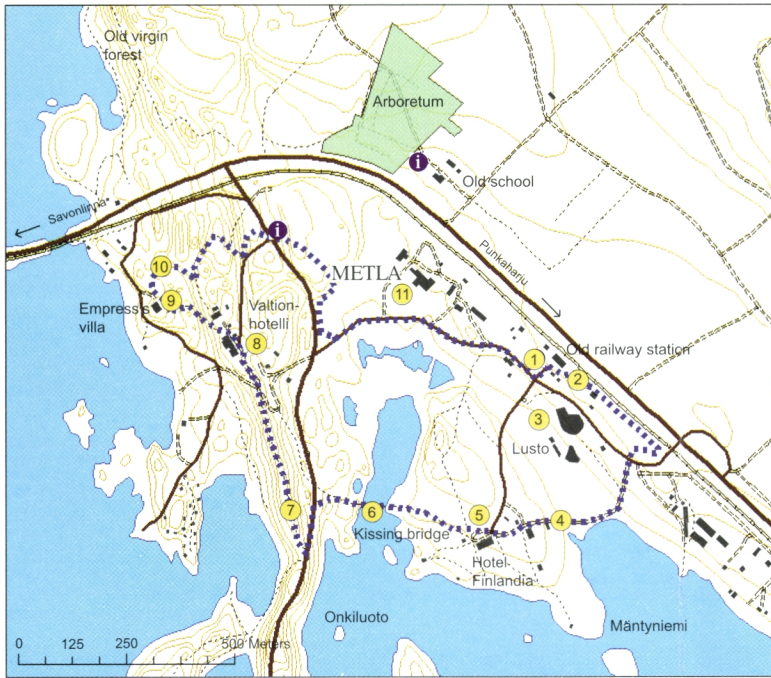


Punkaharju is a narrow esker formation between Puruvesi and Pihlajavesi, two lakes that are part of the Lake Saimaa water system. The esker was formed approximately 10,000 years ago during the most recent glacial period. It has been estimated that it took some 30 years for the esker to build up: loose soil was brought with glacier water along a crevasse in the continental ice sheet to form the seven-kilometre esker.

The Punkaharju Culture Trail provides a chance to become acquainted with many spots of historical interest in the esker area. The trail is 3.5 km long and it is signposted with white marks on trees and direction signs. The trail may be joined at any point. It is also suitable for fitness enthusiasts, because the topography is rolling, and occasionally even physically demanding.

Suomi

English



1. Old Railway Station

The Punkaharju Railway Station, designed by Bruno Granholm, was completed in 1906, in connection with the construction of the Savonlinna-Elisenvaara railway. The station curtilage includes other buildings, mostly built in the same year as the station itself, e.g. an old warehouse and cellar, as well as two outbuildings. The gazebo at the southern end of the platform was built in 1928.



The station was closed in the 1970s due to significantly reduced railway traffic. Today the station is used as the Guidance Centre and Exhibitions facility of the Punkaharju nature conservation area.

2. Lime tree lane

The lime tree, especially the common lime (*Tilia × vulgaris*) is common in urban environments along lanes

and in parks. Lime tree lane was planted in the early 1900s for aesthetic as well as practical purposes. In the era of steam engines, the lane served as a firewall. Lime trees live to a great age. These trees, which are almost 100 years old, are still in good condition.

3. Lusto

Lusto, the Finnish Forest Museum and Forest Information Centre, designed by architect Rainer Mahlamäki, represents modern architecture. The basic exhibition, several special exhibitions, theme days and events lead the visitor through the forest, from the past into the future, to study the diversified interaction between man and the forest. Lusto was opened in June 1994 and the annex was completed in spring 2005.

In the courtyard there is a life-sized sculpture called Ajomies (Haulier) by Herman Joutsen. It pays tribute to the man and horse teams, that used to toil in forests. Visitors can freely use the Metsäkätö (Forest Hideaway) barbecue hut behind Lusto.

4. Boat Shed

The shingle-roofed boat shed on the shore of Lake Puruvesi was completed in 1997 to protect a church boat, and the construction work was partly carried out as a local team effort. The church boat shore is part of the Lusto courtyard area and the boat can be rented from Lusto. Small boats can arrive in Lusto by landing on the church boat shore, if the boat can go under the esker's stone bridge or under the main road bridge.

5. Hotel Finlandia

Hotel Finlandia, locally called "Vinska", has a place in the history of hotels in Finland. The building was designed by the architect-brothers Valter and Ivar Thomén. As signs of the era after Art Nouveau and nationalistic romanticism, it contains typical themes of Baroque and Renaissance, such as oval-shaped windows, gable motifs and bowl ornaments.



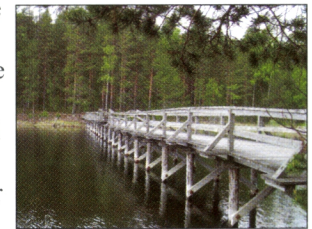
The first guests were accommodated in Hotel Finlandia in July 1914. During its early days it was a popular holiday resort for the aristocracy of St. Petersburg.

The First World War caused hard times and reduced tourism. The hotel became burdened with debts and, consequently, the ownership of Hotel Finlandia was transferred to the state. In 1933 the state conveyed it to the Finnish Tourist Association.

The state re-purchased the dilapidated buildings and rented them to the Punkaharju Rehabilitation Hospital. After the renovation which was completed in 1982 the Finlandia facilities are used as an annex to the Kruunupuisto Rehabilitation Centre.

6. Kissing Bridge

The bridge was built by the Finnish Tourist Association in 1930's to shorten the distance from Hotel Finlandia to the esker area and Valtionhotelli. The bridge may have been named after the romantic endearments expressed by those using the bridge, enchanted by the scenic nature. The bridge was repaired by the Finnish Forest Research Institute in 1983, and it was officially inaugurated for use - along with kisses, naturally.



7. Museum Road

The old country road on the ridge was originally used as a trail by huntsmen, and with time it developed into an important throughfare. The history of the ridge road dates back to the 16th century, when a road connection was built from Vyborg Castle to Olavinlinna Castle, founded in 1475. The road was particularly used for courier service but was also used by troops of soldiers. You can use the very same original road and march forward to the next point of interest, the courtyard of Valtionhotelli.