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Map of Finland



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Sammallahdenmäki Bronze Age Burial Site

In 1999, Sammallahdenmäki became the first Finnish archaeological site to be inscribed on the World Heritage List. The cairn burial site is a unique whole representing the religious and funerary habits of a community living in western Finland during the Scandinavian Bronze Age and early Iron Age (1500–50 BC). The dead were buried in stone cairns, which were built on the rocks by the sea. A winding path from one ridge to the next descends towards Lake Saarnijärvi, which used to be an inlet of the sea in the Bronze Age.

Cairns piled with boulders line the path: low small cairns and large mound-like cairns. The best-known individual archaeological features of the Sammallahdenmäki burial site that make it unique are the flat, floor-like 'Church Floor' and the wall-like 'Long Ruin of Huilu', which were excavated as early as 1891. However, no artefacts were found in these excavations. More recent digs have uncovered burnt human bone in several of the cairns, which shows that people have been cremated in the cairns.

Sammallahdenmäki Bronze Age Burial Site is maintained by Rauma Museum.



Struve Geodetic Arc

The Struve Geodetic Arc was inscribed as a World Heritage site of Finland and nine other countries in 2005. The Arc stretches from the shore of the Arctic Ocean approximately 2,820 km south to the Black Sea. The Arc traverses Finland for almost 1,000 km. This chain of meridian measurements was named after the German astronomer F. G. W. Struve, who in the early 19th century decided to determine the size and shape of the Earth by triangulation and astronomical observations. Measurement of the triangulation chain took place between 1816 and 1855. Originally, the Arc passed through the territories of Russia and Sweden, but in today's geography it passes through ten different countries: Norway, Sweden, Finland, Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine. All in all 34 station points have been selected to represent the whole Arc as a joint World Heritage of the countries involved.

The Arc represented a great step in the development of our view of the world and of science. It is also a good example of early and successful co-operation between scientists in different countries, to which the heads of state were also committed.



Kvarken Archipelago

The Kvarken Archipelago in Finland and the High Coast in Sweden make up a joint World Heritage Site. Together they serve as a unique example of rapid land uplift caused by the most recent glacial period and ongoing geological development and biological processes. During the most recent glacial period, Kvarken was in the centre of the ice sheet covering northern Europe. The weight of the ice mass depressed the earth's crust by up to 1,000 m. The rare washboard moraines or De Geer moraines of Kvarken were formed along the edge of the melting ice.

Released from under the weight of the ice some 10,000 years ago, the land is still rising today by almost a metre a century. The land uplift will thus connect Finland with Sweden in 2,000 years' time. There are 5,600 islands in the World Heritage area, but the majority of the 1944 km² area is under water. The shallow and rocky Kvarken with its newly-evolved bays is one of the most significant nesting places for sea birds in the Baltic Sea. Traditional sources of livelihood and traditions are still practiced in the villages in the area.

Unesco World Heritage Sites in Finland



World Heritage – Our Shared Treasure

The preservation of world heritage is a responsibility shared by all of humanity. World Heritage sites belong to all the peoples of the world, irrespective of the territory where they are located. Being accepted as a Cultural Heritage site requires that the site is a masterpiece of human creativity or otherwise bears exceptionally significant evidence of an existing or extinct culture.



Sites selected for World Heritage listing are approved on the basis of their merit as the best examples of immaterial heritage — knowledge, skills, views and traditions — or of material heritage as concrete objects. They may speak of an important development stage in the history of the earth, or may be an example of an ongoing ecological or biological change. They may also be a haven for endangered species or represent exceptionally beautiful scenery.

The UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage is aimed at the preservation and management of our heritage so that it can be passed on to future generations in as authentic a form as possible. By 2008, the Convention had been ratified by 185 governments. The World Heritage Committee meets once a year and examines nominations on the basis of technical evaluations provided by two advisory bodies, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the World Conservation Union (IUCN).

Unesco World Heritage List:
<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list>



Old Rauma

Old Rauma is the most extensive coherent wooden town area in the Nordic region, with more than 600 well-preserved wooden houses. The current housing stock reflects the golden age of sailing ships in the 1890s. At that time, many of the buildings on the main street were adorned with Neo-Renaissance exteriors.

The lively trading area is centred on Market Square and in the adjacent shopping streets, lined with approximately 200 shops, delightful restaurants and cafés as well as artists' workshops. Standing among the idyllic wooden houses as an integral part of Old Rauma is the Church of the Holy Cross, originally the church of a Franciscan monastery, with impressive Mediaeval paintings in the choir.

The narrow streets of Old Rauma follow the lines set down in the Middle Ages. Since the fire that destroyed the town in 1682, Old Rauma has grown into a densely built and active urban centre with more than 800 inhabitants – the heart of the town of Rauma even today.



Suomenlinna Sea Fortress

The sea fortress of Suomenlinna, founded on the islands off the coast of Helsinki in the mid-18th century, is one of the cultural treasures of Finland. It has played a role in the defence of three states: Sweden, Russia and Finland.

Suomenlinna was inscribed into the World Heritage List to be preserved for future generations as an example of 18th- and 19th-century fortress architecture in Europe. It is a bastion fortress constructed on six islands and on terrain with varied relative altitude.

During the Russian era 1808–1917 it was a lively garrison town. After Finland became independent in 1917, Suomenlinna was turned into a Finnish garrison. During World War II, it played a vital part in the air defence of Helsinki and also housed a submarine base. The fortress was handed over to civilian administration in 1973, but its military tradition is continued by the Naval Academy, which is still based there.

The fortress is also a vibrant community with more than 800 inhabitants. Renovated fortifications and garrison buildings serve now as apartments, workshops, meeting and banquet halls, restaurants and museums. More than 650,000 people visit Suomenlinna annually.



Petäjavesi Old Church

Petäjavesi Old Church was inscribed into the World Heritage List as being representative of the wooden church architecture tradition of northern Europe. It is an example of how local master builders on the fringes of Western culture and the Lutheran Church applied influences from central European architecture to traditional log construction.

The church, located by the lake, was built between 1763 and 1765. Its roof is steep and hipped at the ends of the transept. The points of the cross-shaped interior taper upwards in the manner of the false perspective favoured by Baroque architects.

The interior of the church has remained almost in its original guise. The sense of space resembles that of central-plan churches of the Renaissance. There are high barrel vaults over the transept and a polygonal cupola above the middle of the church. The hand-carved log surfaces of the vaulting are attached to the roof trusses which are supported by the walls and the collar beam structure resting on them.

The church fell into disuse after 1879 when a new church was built. Nowadays the Old Church at Petäjavesi is used for worship on summer Sundays and is a popular venue for church weddings.



Verla Groundwood and Board Mill

Verla is a well-preserved example of rural small-scale industrial complexes dating from the early years of the Finnish wood processing industry in the 19th and 20th centuries. The main product of the factory was white mechanical pulp board, which was manufactured at different strengths. Verla pulp board gained a good reputation on the markets and was exported to Russia and central Europe.

At Verla, the old groundwood and board mills have been preserved exactly as they were the day they stopped turning in July 1964. All the principal machinery and equipment is still there, and more or less operable too. The mill operations gave rise to a village and mill communities on both sides of the Verla Rapids, as witness the still intact workers' tenements, communal sauna, flour mill, village hall and shop.

The museum is owned and maintained by UPM-Kymmene Plc. Guided tours give visitors the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the various stages of board manufacture. The museum is open during the summer.



Unesco World Heritage Sites in Finland

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