



DISCOVER WHAT WE HAVE TO OFFER

KUOPIO'S NATIONAL
URBAN PARK

KUOPIO

Celebrate What Makes Kuopio Unique

Kuopio's National Urban Park showcases the city's most important and appealing locations, where civilization and nature converge. The park tells the story of our city, strengthens our cultural heritage, and preserves our urban nature, ensuring that its diversity is passed on to future generations.

In Kuopio's National Urban Park, you will experience the best aspects of urban culture, nature, and life. The park encompasses the green spaces of the city centre, architectural gems, areas for commerce and social interaction, unique alleyways, and the expansive beauty of Lake Kallavesi's southern archipelago.

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A City Emerges from Lake Kallavesi

Lake Kallavesi and the city of Kuopio are closely connected. Over time, the people of Kuopio have relied on the surrounding waters and archipelago for food, transportation, and leisure activities. Kuopio would not exist without Kallavesi, and Kallavesi would not be the same without Kuopio.

The completion of the Saimaa Canal in 1856 facilitated water traffic from Kuopio to the open seas, promot-

ing trade and contributing to the city's industrial growth. Kuopio has also served as a significant regional centre for administration and education, playing a vital role in Finnish culture and the pursuit of equality. Influential cultural figures from Kuopio, such as Minna Canth, Maria Jotuni, and J. V. Snellman, left their mark on Finnish history.





Events at the Harbour and Market Square

The harbour area has become a popular event destination, centred around the Harbour Market and the adjacent Harbour Park. During summer, inland waterway ships depart from the harbour, while winter transforms the ice of Kallavesi into a venue for skating and skiing. The Customs warehouse from the 1850s and the cargo terminal from 1879 are prominent historical landmarks in the area. From the passenger

harbour, visitors can stroll along the alleyways and park paths to the beloved Market Square, a favoured gathering spot for Kuopio residents. The open-air market's trading history dates back to the 1800s and is surrounded by notable buildings such as City Hall (1885), the Market Hall (1902), and the Lyceum School (1826). Additionally, the well-known statues Veljmies and Siskotyttö stand at the edge of the market.

The Archipelago: A Valuable Natural, Fishing, and Recreational Area

The archipelago's expansive lakes and mosaic of islands create a diverse and stunning landscape. Long sandy beaches and lush pine forests nestled among rocky shores draw people outdoors to relax and unwind. This area is prized for its rich natural beauty, fishing opportunities, and recreational activities. It's no wonder that city residents have been flocking to Hietasalo and similar spots for over a century.

Kallavesi and its archipelago offer year-round experiences: in winter, visitors enjoy hiking, skiing, and ice fishing, making the most of the

rejuvenation that nature provides throughout the seasons."

The numerous bird islets in the archipelago serve as vital nesting sites for various bird species. To enhance nesting conditions, birdhouses and artificial nests for ospreys have been installed throughout the archipelago.

Most of the National Urban Park in the Kallavesi Archipelago is owned by the city of Kuopio and is open to everyone. The park features several city-maintained campfire and landing sites, wilderness huts, and a sauna on Hauto-Koisti Island.

Accessibility has been prioritised, particularly on Hietasalo Island. Visitors can enjoy these facilities year-round.

A passenger ferry operates between Kuopio Harbour and Hietasalo Island, where guests can relax on beautiful sandy beaches and experience the charm of a large log cabin. Hietasalo also offers a lean-to, campfire sites, and a hiking trail.





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and its archipela-
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hout the year.

Historical Parks

Starting in the mid-1800s, cities began developing public parks to encourage residents to improve their health by enjoying walks in the fresh air.

Among the oldest parks in Kuopio are Vainölänniemi Peninsula, Snellman Park, and Bishop's Park, all of which were established during the same period as Finland's earliest parks.





From Vänölänniemi Peninsula to Haapaniemi District

Vänölänniemi Peninsula's long history as a public park began in the late 1850s when the lands of the vicarage were annexed to the city. For over a century, the area has served as a site for sports and recreation. With its lush park environment, diverse recreational opportunities, and popular beach, "Vänäri" is a vibrant gathering place, particularly during the summer months. The peninsula extends southward, linking the grid-plan city centre to the Kallavesi Archipelago.

At the base of Vänölänniemi Peninsula, the natural reed-covered shores of Kuopio Bay begin. Along the shoreline trail, visitors can observe the nesting activities of great crested grebes and gulls.

This trail leads to the Haapaniemi District, where historical wooden houses, distinctive residential buildings, and street names reflect the area's working-class and industrial heritage.





Take a Breath in the Middle of the City

On the hill of Vahtivuori stands the city's first public stone building, Kuopio Cathedral, which has dominated the cityscape for 200 years. To the east of the church lies Snellman Park, one of Kuopio's most impressive parks and historical-

ly significant areas. This park was once the city's main market square. The park has preserved its original 19th-century charm.

The cathedral — Kuopio's fifth church — was constructed in the early 1800s atop the highest point in the area, after the guard post and windmill previously situated on the hill were relocated elsewhere. Surrounding the park are notable

buildings, including Minna Canth's former residence, the Workers' Association Hall, the Bank of Finland, Kuopio Museum, and a structure originally built as an industrial school, now known as Snellman School.

Kuopio Museum is one of Finland's oldest buildings specifically designed as a museum.

Play, Exercise, and Enjoy the Beauty

Valkeisenpuisto Park was developed in several stages during the 1950s and 1960s around Valkeisenlampi Pond. The pond once played a crucial role in supplying water to two hospitals situated on its shores, as well as to the nearby barracks area. Today, the park is one of the city's most popular recreational spots, characterised by its diverse flora and vegetation. It offers a wide range of opportunities for play and exercise and is surrounded by notable buildings from various eras.

Adjacent to the pond lies the former barracks area, known for its historic wooden structures. This area possesses a long military history, spanning from the city's establishment under Swedish rule by King Gustav III of Sweden (1775) to Finland's period as an autonomous Grand Duchy under Russia (1809-1917), as well as Finland's post-independence era (1917-onwards). The area is also home to several valuable old trees.

In the northeast corner of Kuopio's grid-plan city centre lie Minna Canth Park and Hapelähde Park, connected by scenic bridges over the Maljapuro stream. The local sports facilities in Hapelähde Park provide ample opportunities for play and exercise. The park is lush with vegetation, featuring grasses, perennials, flowering trees, and stunning autumn foliage.





Alleyways – A Unique Feature of Kuopio's Pedestrian Centre

The network of alleyways in Kuopio's city centre is the most extensively preserved in Finland, making it quite remarkable. These alleyways connect parks, the harbour, and the renowned Kuopio Market Square.

South of Kuopio Cathedral on Sorvarinkatu Street, the historical features of the alleyways are particularly evident. These narrow passages, built as firebreaks, were designed to protect the old wooden city from fires.



NATIONAL URBAN PARK – What Is It?

A National Urban Park is a large, cohesive space that combines urban nature with built cultural environments, preserving its diversity, history, and various elements for the benefit and enjoyment of everyone.

Once a city receives this title, it commits to preserving and managing the natural and cultural heritage values of the urban park area.

The title of National Urban Park is granted by the Ministry of the Environment. Cities that achieve

this designation are dedicated to safeguarding and managing the natural and cultural heritage of the urban park.

Network cities highlight Finland's growth and development, with Kuopio standing out as a prime example. The city's unique connection to the Kallavesi archipelago has played a pivotal role in shaping its remarkable journey.

Explore, experience, and fall in love
with all the National Urban Parks in Finland!

kansallisetkaupunkipuistot.fi/en/

kuopio.fi/national-urban-park

**The area of Kuopio's National Urban Park
(environment):** map.kuopio.fi



KUOPIO

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