

KOLI FINLAND

A photograph of two young children sitting on a large, grey, craggy rock formation. The child in the foreground is a boy with light brown hair, wearing a light blue t-shirt and khaki pants, looking towards the left. Behind him is another child wearing a yellow t-shirt and a light-colored bucket hat, also looking left. The background shows a wide expanse of a blue lake or bay, surrounded by green forested hills under a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds.

The best-known view in Finland is from the top of Koli, the highest point in what remains of the ancient Karelid mountain range.

The National Park and the nearby village are the nucleus. Holiday homes are found between Loma-Koli and the harbour.



UNIQUE KOLI

BETWEEN EAST AND WEST

Koli has been a meeting point between eastern and western cultures for hundreds of years. It has a broad range of attractions: the geology of the area; the interplay between rock and water in the landscape; rich flora and fauna; and a living culture with reminders of a mystic past ever present. For over a century Koli has provided visitors with opportunities for renewal and growth.

As a centre for culture and nature Koli is unique. At its heart lies the National Park, where swidden culture (also known as slash-and-burn) is still regularly practised. Here you can also find the native 'kyyttö' cattle grazing as in days gone by.

You can reach the Park by water summer and winter. In summer Finland's only inland waterway car-ferry plies between Koli and Lieksa, in winter there is a road across the lake ice!



A particular feature of the Koli landscape in winter is the snow-covered trees. In addition to glorious scenery Koli offers the steepest ski slopes in southern Finland; snowshoe treks; fishing through the lake ice; driving the ice road; snowmobile and dog-team trails; extreme events; ski trails over hill and lake. Just some of the things that make Koli unique.

Regardless of the season, sunrise and sunset at Koli – a dream come true.



KOLI – A REMNANT OF THE KARELID MOUNTAINS

Koli is a geological treasure house, including the diamonds. Here the Karelid Mountains in their time (i.e. 2 000 000 000 years ago) rivalled the modern Himalayas. But the elements, especially a succession of ice-ages, have eroded these former giants down to their present size. Now the highest point, Ukko-Koli, rises 253 metres above Lake Pielinen, and 347m above sea-level.

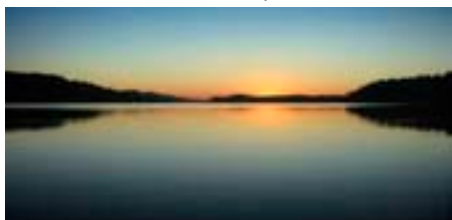
At various times Koli has been desert, covered by ocean waters and glaciers, and part of a mountain range. A special feature of the area is the Harjusaari island chain, poking their way above the surface of Lake Pielinen, with lovely sandy beaches.

Koli has been a sacred place, to which local people have come to make sacrifice and pray to the gods for success in the hunt. Two of the best-known cult spots are the Uhrihalkeama

(sacrificial crevice) and Pirunkirkko (Devil's church).

Composer Jean Sibelius, painter Eero Järnefelt, photographer I.K.Inha, along with a host of other artists including the American author Kurt Vonnegut, have been Koli fans. It has also been the setting for over 20 films, including David Lean's *Dr.Zhivago*, not to mention a Finnish TV-soap.

The local arts society, together with artists' residencies and active villagers, ensure that the local arts scene is lively.



KOLI NATIONAL PARK

SWIDDEN CULTURE AND RESEARCH



The heart of Koli is the National Park with its unique geological features. Besides geology, the Park has glorious sandy beaches, magnificent hill scenery, verdant groves of trees, colourful flowering meadows and the islands of Lake Pielinen.

The National Park covers a total of 3 000 hectares. Within its boundaries there are untouched forest areas, birch groves, tree plantations, grazed meadows, esker islands and traditional homesteads.

The Koli Heritage Centre near the Ukko-Koli summit is open daily to provide visitors with information. You'll also find there the Koli Tradition exhibition covering geology, nature, the arts, and traditional farming methods. Under the same roof you'll find a 200-seater auditorium and Vakka nature shop.

Don't be surprised if you smell smoke during a summer visit to Koli. Several times a year the traditional slash-and-burn method of clearing farmland is still practised within the Park. This is how earlier settlers cleared

and fertilised the ground for crops of turnips and rye. These burnings are the subject of research and international congresses.

Lake Pielinen

The slopes of Koli rise straight from the shores of Lake Pielinen, Finland's 4th largest. Covering approx. 900 km², 90 kilometres long and 28 kms wide, Pielinen can almost be regarded as an inland sea. It was formed about 10 000 years ago, at the end of the last ice age. There are 1259 islands in the lake, the sandy Harjusaaret (Ridge Islands) being part of the National Park. Here you'll find places for campfires, and mooring for boats. Although fish are abundant, catching them takes a certain skill, and familiarity with the waters. Maximum depth is 61 metres.

Also within the Park there is an attractive harbour used by the Lieksa-Koli car ferry. Nearby there is mooring for visitors' boats, the Alamaja info centre and restaurant, and a purpose-built centre for handling fish catches.



FOUR SEASONS

COLOURFUL KOLI

From the first delicate green of spring with its myriad wild flowers to sunbaked rock surrounded by summer forest green; the reds and golds of autumn followed by the snow-white, ice-blue, and greys that dominate the winter scene. Koli – in full colour.

When the landscape is snowbound conditions are ideal for snowshoeing, snowboarding, downhill and cross-country skiing. But when winter has released its grip, then it's the time for studying nature, or listening to some blues.

The climate at Koli is continental, which means a stark contrast between summer and winter seasons.

Normally the annual thaw starts during April and the hiking trails are open by mid-May. The lake becomes ice-free around May 20th, but even in summer the water temperature seldom rises above 20C°. May usually brings the beginning of warmer summery weather when the light nights are filled with birdsong on the Koli hills. The long hot sum-

mer days can be interrupted by sudden brief thunder storms.

Lake Pielinen acts as a storage heater in autumn, delaying the onset of winter and the formation of winter ice. The intensity of autumn colour varies from year to year, but this season of darkening evenings is perfect for star-gazing, for candlelight and camp fires.

Winter at Koli generally begins in November. Snow cover increases steadily and the thermometer falls dramatically. The lake is completely frozen by Christmas, and thaws again in mid-May. The ice-road across the lake is usually open for 2-3 months in the heart of winter. The silvery landscape lit by a full moon on a stark winter night with a warm log cabin to return to – the stuff of dreams!



ACTIVITIES

WEDDINGS TO LANTERN-LIGHT WALKS



Koli offers a broad programme of activities and interests: theatre, exhibitions, boating, fishing, hiking, riding, cycling, spelunking, snowshoeing, skiing and snowboarding, sleigh rides and dog-team sledding, snowmobiling – and good Karelian food.

If you time your visit right you might witness the annual forest burn, or participate in traditional rye reaping. A resident artist at Ryynänen's, at the village crossroads; international seminars at Ukko-Koli Heritage Centre; volunteer work camps in the National Park; and a variety of school camps all add colour to village life.

For those of a romantic turn there are lantern-lit walks on darkening evenings. And what better way to start married life than a wedding ceremony at the Temple of Silence among the wild Koli hills.

Within the National Park there are 60 kilometres of hiking trails, with more beyond its boundaries. The 40 km Herajärvi Lake Circuit was voted 'national hike of the year' for 2007.

Some of the trails are themed, with info boards along the route in various languages, usually English, German, and Russian. The whole area is full of country roads suitable for cycling.

The big attraction in winter is the snow, in all its aspects. Thickly coating the hills and forest, it offers glorious skiing both cross-country and downhill on the steepest slope in southern Finland. Within the Park alone there are 15 kilometres of marked trails for skiers and snowshoers, with more outside the Park. The area hosts two major mass-skiing events each winter, it has the longest lighted ski trail in Finland, and there is a second downhill skiing centre at Loma-Koli.





GENERAL INFORMATION

IN BRIEF

SHOPS, POST OFFICE: in Koli village, at Kolinportti Gateway (crossroads of Hwy 6 with Hwy 504), and in Vuonislahti village.

CAFÉS, RESTAURANTS:

HOTEL KOLI – hotel, restaurant, coffee-bar.

ALAMAJA at Koli harbour open summer June-August; winter ski season (Christmas-New Year; Easter; end of February and early March).

VAKKA: at Ukko-Koli Heritage Centre, coffee-bar and gift shop, open daily

RINNETUPA Ski Lodge and coffee-bar at the Loma-Koli ski slopes, open in season.

RYYNÄNEN: coffee-bar and artists' residencies in Koli village.

LOMA-KOLIN PORTTI and Camping: holiday season services.

ACCOMMODATION, from log shelters to hotels: Hotel Koli, Koli Hostel, holiday homes and apartments, caravan sites at Loma-Koli, Vuonislahti, and Kopravaara, rental cabins and outback camping in the National Park.

ORGANISED ACTIVITIES: Koli Activ Oy, Karelia Expert Tourist Service, Vuoniskylät

HEALTH services: in Joensuu

ALKO shops: in Juuka, Joensuu, Eno, Lieksa

CHURCHES: Koli village, Vuonislahti village

LOCAL MUSEUMS: Koli, Ahmovaara, Lieksa Outdoor Museum, Nunnanlahti Stone Museum.

SOUVENIRS: on sale at Koli village, Ukko-Koli, and Kolinportti.

BANKS, AMTS: cash point at Kolinportti, banks in Juuka, Lieksa, Eno, Joensuu.

CURRENCY: Euro

GENERAL: Finland has two official languages, i.e. Finnish and Swedish, but most Finns speak at least some English. In addition German and Russian are spoken at Koli.

TOURIST INFORMATION and services: in Koli Village at the Karelia Expert office.

NATIONAL PARK information at the Ukko-Koli Heritage Centre.





VUONISLAHTI: Across the lake from Koli lies the village of Vuonismahti, where the late Eva Rynnänen lived and worked. Her massive wood sculptures are renowned. The wooden chapel she built is popular for weddings and concerts. The village itself also offers tourist services and activities including an autumn fish festival.

JUUKA: The Finnish Stone Centre at Juuka has changing exhibitions, a restaurant, demon-

strations of stone masonry, displays of stone stoves and garden structures, and a stone museum.

NURMES: Bomba Karelian village, spa, golf, Christmas Carol Festival.

LIEKSA: international music festival 'Brass Weeks' in July; Ruunaa Recreation Area with fishing, canoeing, hiking; Pikkukili Farm, with farm animals, 'easy access'.





KONTIOLAHTI: golf, movie studio village, artificial out-of-season ski trail.

JOENSUU: lively market place; art museums, Taitokortteli arts and crafts centre.

OUTOKUMPU: the old mine.

ILOMANTSI: Parppeinvaara for traditional kantele music; Möhkö for demonstrations of traditional iron smelting and forging.

LIEKSA AND NURMES also provide organised opportunities to view animals such as bears in the wild.





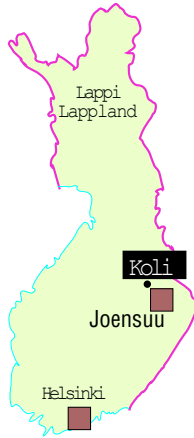
GETTING THERE

BY LAND, WATER, AIR

Koli lies in the heart of North Karelia, 500 kms from Helsinki, 50 kms from the Russian border, 70 kms from the regional capital, Joensuu.

BY AIR: Helsinki-Joensuu under 1 hour plus about 1 hour by road from the airport.

BY TRAIN: Helsinki-Joensuu (4-5 hours). Connection from Joensuu to Vuonisahti or Lieksa (1-2 hours).



BY WATER: ship from Joensuu; car ferry from Lieksa; boats from Vuonisahti.

BY ROAD: from Joensuu by bus, taxi, rented car.

In the early 1900s travellers took a train to Vuonisahti on the eastern shore of the lake and arranged the lake crossing with local boatmen. This is still possible.

FOR THE ACTIVE traveller there are marked hiking trails from Joensuu airport, railway station, and market place (70 km)





BOOKS, MAPS:

Koli guide (in English) 2007

Koli erleben (German) 2008

Outdoor Karelia, Finland (English): 2005

Koli summer tourist map (Finnish, English, German, Russian): 2007

Geologisk friluftskarta Koli (Swedish): 1:20 000 (2003)

Geological Outdoor Map Koli (English) 1:20 000 (2003)

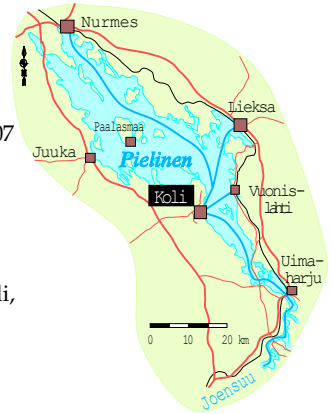
MUSIC: Jean Sibelius, 4th Symphony, (inspired by Koli)

FILMS: Markku Pölönen Kivenpyörittäjän kylä

INTERNET: www.koli.fi, www.kareliaexpert.fi, www.metla.fi/koli, www.luontoon.fi, www.vaellus.info, www.outdoors.fi

TOURIST INFO:

Karelia Expert Tourist Service,
www.kareliaexpert.fi



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Koli Guide Project has also produced the book 'Koli-opas' in Finnish (English version 'Koli guide', German version 'Koli erleben').

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