

# Paths of Saaremaa's past and its crafters



Linking Estonia and Latvia  
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Photos: Ülo Emmus, Anna-Maria Erik, Tõnu Lint, Irina Mägi, Erika Thalheim

Kuresaare Tourist Information Center Town Hall,  
Tallinna 2, 9819 Kuresaare, Estonia  
tel/fax +372 453 3120  
tel +372 455 0550

kuresaare@vististestonia.com • www.vististestonia.com • www.saaremaa.ee



## One Vacation – Two Countries



## Kuivastu – Liiva – Koguva – Orissaare – Pöide – Valjala – Kaali

### Kuivastu Pub

The pub house was built in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and is one of the few pub houses with an original corner solution that has preserved in Estonia until today. The building has a beautiful façade with dolomite pillars. This respectable house has been used as a pub and a postal station. Writer and linguist Villem Grünthal-Ridala was born in a chamber in Kuivastu Pub in 1885.

### Pädaste Manor

This manor complex from the 16<sup>th</sup> century was one of the smallest manors in Muhu in its day. Today, however, it is indisputably the most famous manor in the county. Pädaste has a luxurious spa complex and it is the only five-star hotel in Estonia that is located outside Tallinn. The uniqueness of the Tudor mansion built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is emphasised by the outbuildings, which were built in the style of the traditional natural stone buildings of Muhu.

+372 45 48 800, www.padaste.ee

### Jüri-Jaani Farm Studio

A farm studio has been operating in the renovated Lõetsa farmhouse for many years under the guidance of renowned Estonian ceramist Margret Tafel. The ceramics created by the artist are displayed in the cosy gallery and they are also available to buy. Visitors of the farm studio can also admire the wooden interior design creations of Sulev Vähtra. As the designer is also interested in landscaping, his works now include larger pieces that can be used to decorate gardens. The artist is happy to introduce the wonderful world of clay processing to visitors if you book your visit in advance.

+372 51 02 183, margeta@gmail.com



### Muhu St Catherine's (Katarina) Church

Building the stone church in Liiva Village in the middle of Muhu Island started in the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The exterior of Muhu St Catherine's Church, which is considered one of the most outstanding buildings in early Gothic style, is dominated by a unique three-tier division. The thick walls of the church, the stairs leading to the arches and the small windows high in the walls give reason to believe that the church has also been used as a shelter.

+372 45 98 549, www.eelk.ee/muhu/

### Liiva – the centre of Muhu Island

Liiva Village is the centre of Muhu Island. A post office, food store, antique shop and the island's unique eateries are located here. There are also two great crafts shops in the village. The first of them sells the gloves and mittens, scarves, slippers and skirts made by the skilful Muhu women and many other handicrafts characteristic of the island. Visitors of the leather shop next door can observe the masters at work and buy the fluffy slippers, waistcoats and other leather items created by them.



### Koguva Village

The best preserved village ensemble in Estonia can be found in Koguva. This 16<sup>th</sup> century village is a great example of the traditional farm architecture of the islands. Writer Juhan Smuul, who was born and raised here, was also inspired by the winding roads and long stone fences of Koguva Village. Muhu Museum is located on his father's farm at Tooma, where visitors can also see an exposition of traditional Muhu handicrafts. Many of the historical buildings of Koguva Village are currently used by companies offering accommodation.

+372 45 48 872, www.muuseum.ee



### Muhu ostriches

An ostrich farm has been operating in Nautse Village on Muhu Island since 1999. You can observe the representatives of three of the world's five flightless bird species. Emus and nandus are also bred on the farm in addition to ostriches. Kangaroos and ponies live there as the family's pets. In the farm shop, you can buy ostrich meat and eggs, various items made of ostrich feathers, ostrich handbags, beauty products made using ostrich fat and many other exciting things.

+372 50 34 237, www.jaanalind.ee

### Eemu Windmill

The windmill in Linnuse Village was built in the ancient windmill sport of Eemu Village in 1980. The post windmill, which is considered the oldest type of windmill in Europe, operates currently as a museum. However, being a museum does not mean that the windmill is simply a nice addition to the scenery. To the contrary – Eemu Windmill is in full working order and still used to mill flour.

+372 45 28 130, www.saaremaamuseum.ee

### Väinatamm

The two largest islands in Saare County are connected by the 3.5 km dam of Väike Väin Strait. The road extension between the two islands was opened for traffic in summer 1896. The dam was supported with bundles of twigs to keep it from sinking and crossing it cost 5 kopek for pedestrians and 15 kopek for horsemen. The first car drove on the dam ten years after it was built. After several expansions and improvements, the dam is now a two-lane concrete road. In spring and autumn, you can stop in its crescent-shaped 'pockets' and admire the swans in Väike Väin Strait.

### Orissaare

Orissaare is the second largest town in Saaremaa after Kuresaare. Orissaare has a beautiful little marina, which is the home harbour for the local youngsters who learn sailing on Väike Väin Strait. Many serious seamen have grown up in Orissaare over the years as students can acquire their secondary education in a specialised marine class.

### Maasi Stronghold

Saaremaa was divided between the Order of the Brethren of the Sword and the Archbishop of Riga in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The bishop built his castle on the southern coast of the island (today known as the Kuresaare Episcopal Castle) whilst the order established its centre at Maasi after Pöide Fortress was destroyed in 1345. The castle was seriously damaged during the various military operations of the subsequent centuries and it was blown up completely in 1576. The first floor and part of the second floor of the castle have been dug out by today in the course of restoration.



### Pöide St Mary's (Maarja) Church

The chapel that belonged to the castle of the Order of the Brethren of the Sword used to be located at the site of the present Pöide Church. The present church was built in the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. It is the largest medieval church in Saaremaa and its massive appearance makes it resemble a castle or a fortress rather than a church. The church caught fire from lightning in 1940. Most of the interior and the roof perished in the fire. A new roof has been built for the church, but major renovation works still need to be done. +372 50 37 008



### Piret's Stone

Piret's Stone is the largest boulder in Saaremaa. The stone is almost 4 metres high and 18 metres in diameter and it features in a legend about the ancient hero of Saaremaa Suur Tõll and his wife Piret. The legend says that Piret was carrying stones to Tõll who was building a sauna when the laces on her apron broke and the boulder fell on the ground. Ribbons have often been tied to tree branches near the stone after the traditions of old Estonian 'earth believers' to make people's wishes come true.

### Valjala Stronghold

### Oti Manor

Oti Manor, the oldest manor in Saaremaa, was first mentioned in writing in 1309. The mansion of the manor we can see today was built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Several building styles can be noticed in the general appearance of the manor as it has been repeatedly extended and rebuilt. The manor has belonged to many respectable families over the centuries. This beautifully restored building is currently used by an establishment providing accommodation.

+372 51 17 773, www.otimanoor.ee

### Koigi Bog

Many other forms of landscape can be found in Saaremaa in addition to coastal meadows covered with junipers. Koigi swamplands with their area of almost 4000 hectares hide many rarities of nature. 35 different species of plants have been found in the fen here and many migratory birds love to stop in the swamplands. A 4-kilometre hiking trail winds between the four fen lakes.

+372 50 32 762, www.hot.ee/koigiraba



### Mihkel Rand's Dendrological Garden

Neemi Village's blacksmith Mihkel Rand started to create a dendrological garden around his house in 1925. Preparing the limestone ground so it would be suitable for growing plants was a job in itself. But the man who loved nature so much managed to do it and there are currently more than 200 species of trees and shrubs growing in the dendrological garden. These include many rare foreign species such as black pine, hiba tree, ginkgo etc. The lush green garden is decorated with a pond and oak benches. The dendrological garden is under protection.

+372 50 32 762, www.rmk.ee



### Kaali Crater Field

Kaali Crater Field was created by the meteorites that fell on the Earth in ancient times and its main crater, which is 110 metres in diameter, is the easiest to access among meteorite craters in Europe and it is also the youngest large meteorite crater in Europe. The meteorite created massive chaos when it hit the Earth as the area was already inhabited by people at the time. The exact time when the meteorite fell on the Earth has not been determined yet and there are many other mystical things associated with the crater field in addition to the undetermined time of its emergence. There are at least 8 smaller craters in Kaali in addition to the main crater. A visitor's centre has been built by the main crater, where you can learn more about the history of the craters and meteorites.

+372 45 91 184, www.kylastuskeskus.ee

### Blesta Stones

Blesta stone is a memorial established by the Order of Abalti to Goddess Blesta of the Nordic civilisation. The representatives of the order believed that Saaremaa was one of the first regions to emerge from the sea after the disasters that ravaged the world, such as the ice age and floods. This is celebrated with the memorial established at the border of Laheküla Village. At the centre of the memorial is a stone split in half by lightning, which symbolises an altar. The stone surrounded by pieces of limestone laid on the ground in a spiral.

## Aste – Ninase – Angla – Karja – Kaarma

### Aste Silver Factory

Gifts of precious metals are also made in Saaremaa in addition to many traditional products associated with the island, such as juniper butter knives and Muhu slippers. A company that produces silverware has been operating at Aste since 1963. You can buy silver-plated and partly gilded nickel-silver items from the shop next to the factory. Every housewife will find the most beautiful silverware to go with her coffee or dinner in this little shop.

+372 45 47 082, www.sarmet.ee

### Aste Dolomite Workshop

The Dolomite Workshop at Aste was opened in 2008 and it shows its guests how dolomite is processed. You can also pre-order an introduction of the coastal cliffs of Saaremaa and the history of dolomite mining. Tours to the Kaarma dolomite quarry and the mines of Saare Dolomiti are organised for interested visitors. You can buy the dolomite souvenirs made in the workshop from the shop next door.

+372 51 32 269, taivop@tt.ee

### Lihulinna Stronghold

Lihulinn, which is also called Kärla Stronghold, is the most impressive stronghold in Saaremaa in terms of construction. The stronghold is located far from populated areas in the middle of the forest and is built on sand dunes, which are partly surrounded by swamps. The area of the inner yard of the stronghold, which is surrounded by a circular wall that is up to 10 metres high, is approximately 18,000 m<sup>2</sup>. The burnt log-ends and layer of coal found in the holes dug on the inner foot of the stronghold refer to the formed wooden structures used to fortify the stronghold.



### Angla Windmill Hill

You can learn about the history of the well-known symbols of Saaremaa on Angla Windmill Hill. The windmills of the entire village were built here as it used to be the highest spot of the village open to all winds. Five of the nine windmills have survived until today. All five windmills have been restored by now. The history and culture exhibition in the Dutch windmill introduces the live and activities of a miller's family and those who want to learn about milling flour and how the windmill works can go on a guided tour of Vilidu windmill. The Angla Cultural Heritage Centre established on the foot of the windmill hill will open its doors in 2011.

+372 51 99 02 65, www.auglatuulik.ee

### Karja Church

Karja Church is the smallest of medieval churches in Saaremaa. However, the beautiful architecture of the tiny church means it is no less important than its larger neighbours. The church was built in the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> centuries and most of its original appearance has been preserved. The sculptural décor of the church is particularly noteworthy and puts Karja Church among country churches with the biggest number of carved sculptures in all Northern Europe. The magical pagan signs painted on the ceiling above the church's altar during its construction have attracted a lot of attention and can still be seen there today.

+372 45 73 652

### Old Woman and Old Man

Windmills are a pretty common feature of Saaremaa landscapes. However, the windmills in Ninase Village are unique and cannot be found anywhere else. Traditional windmills have been rebuilt to resemble dolls dressed in folk costume. The island's hero Suur Tõll and his wife Piret stand by the road leading to the tip of the peninsula like joyful greeters. Lots of pebbles with names can be found under Piret's skirt – they have been placed there by new brides who said goodbye to their maiden names and hope for a happy marriage.



### Saaremaa Harbour

The youngest member of the Port of Tallinn is also further away from home than any of the others – it is Saaremaa Harbour in Ninase Village, Saaremaa. After many a dispute, the long-awaited harbour was finally opened in 2006. The two quays at the edge of a pine forest welcome cruise ships that are up to 200 metres long. As it is the only harbour in Saaremaa that can receive ships as large as this, it has also become a popular sight for people travelling by road.

+372 50 33 208, j.grisin@ts.ee

### Estonia Memorial

The memorial was erected on Tagaranna Cliff in autumn 1999. The black cross, which stands on a patchwork of stones, honours the memory of those who perished in the Estonia shipwreck during a stormy September night five years earlier. Many of the people who died that night were from Saaremaa. This place was selected for the memorial as it's the nearest point to the Estonia's voyage in Saaremaa.

### Mustjala Mustard

Delicious food and tasty condiments always go hand in hand. A married couple from Germany who were used to quality mustard, but could not find anything to their liking in Estonia, decided to start making their own mustard in their summer home in Saaremaa. They use as many local ingredients as possible to make blackberry, garlic, peppermint and many other interesting mustards and Indian-style spicy chutneys. All products are handmade. Special mustard and chutney tastings are organised for visitors in summer.

+372 56 76 75 26, www.mustjala-mustard.ee

### Laugu Glass Workshop

Glass artist Peeter Rudaš established Laugu Glass Workshop in his summer home. Those who visit the studio can observe how the artist moulds melted glass into beautiful souvenirs using different tools. Visitors can also buy the items made in the workshop. The shop is open to visitors every day, but you have to visit the workshop on odd dates if you want to see the master doing his main job – blowing glass.

+372 53 95 21 00



### GoodKaarma Soap Workshop

GoodKaarma is a unique farm that specialises in making organic soap. People on the farm are happy to share their knowledge of handmade soaps with visitors, who can try to make their own in the workshop. The soap made on the farm is also sold in the gift shop. In addition to soap, visitors can also buy unique items of art and handicrafts such as felt and glass jewellery, wooden toys, drawings and ceramics, candles, etc. The café in the farm's garden offers drinks and snacks.

+372 53 48 40 06, www.goodkaarma.ee

### Kaarma Church

Kaarma Church was built in the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Like many other churches in Saaremaa, Kaarma Church was first built without a tower. The tower was built only in the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and it was the first church tower on the island at the time. More valuable works of art have been preserved in Kaarma than any other Saaremaa church. They include a medieval christening stone (13<sup>th</sup> century) and the wooden sculpture of Simon of Cyrene (middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century).

+372 51 93 44 08



### Kaarma Stronghold

The layout of Kaarma Stronghold is quadrangular. The sides of the inner yard (4,800m<sup>2</sup>) are 140 and 120 metres long. The items found in the course of archaeological digs on the site (part of a spiral bracelet, a cross-head brooch) were dated back to the 12<sup>th</sup> or the 13<sup>th</sup> century, which suggests that the stronghold was established around the same time. The charred remains of logs found in the stronghold's earthwork are associated with the wooden structures that used to stand on the stronghold.

LÄÄNEMERI

VÄINAMERI

SAAREMAA

MUHU

Kuivastu-Virtsu

Küde ma

Orissaare

Kihelkonna

Valjala

Kudjape

KURESSAARE

Salme

LIIVI LAHT

**LEGEND**

- Main road
- Surfaced road; road number
- Gravel road
- Cliff
- Harbour
- Airfield
- Observation tower
- Small harbour
- Lighthouse
- Windmill
- Church
- Hiking trail
- Rest area

1:230 000

0 2 4 6 8km



- 1 Üügu Cliff (12 m)
- 2 Pädaste Manor
- 3 St. Catherine's Church on Muhu: 13th century
- 4 Muhu Museum
- 5 Maasi castle of order: 14th century
- 6 St. Mary's Church in Pöide: 13th century
- 7 Koigi Bog
- 8 St. Martin's Church in Valjala: 13th-14th century
- 9 Angla Windmills
- 10 St Catherine's Church in Karja: 13th century
- 11 Kaali Meteorite Craters
- 12 St James' Church in Püha: 13th-17th century
- 13 Panga Cliff (21m)
- 14 Ninase Post Windmills
- 15 Ninase Cliff (6m)
- 16 Lake Karujärv
- 17 Mihkli Farm Museum
- 18 St Michael's Church in Kihelkonna: 13 century
- 19 Odalätsi Springs
- 20 Harilaid Peninsula
- 21 Vilsandi National Park Centre
- 22 Viidumäe Nature Reserve
- 23 Tehumardi Battlefield (World War II)
- 24 Sääre Lighthouse
- 25 Stebel Coastal Battery, 1940
- 26 Loode Oak Forest

