



Karelia

Valaam • Kizhi • Ruskeala



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"Ruskeala" Mountain Park





ITINERARY PLANNING

Karelia will always be in my dreams...

An astounding wilderness of the North, glacial age rocks and boulders covered with moss and lichen, the chain of islands and picturesque indented coastline of Lakes Ladoga and Onego...

Greater and smaller lakes (locally referred to as “lamba”) boasting an abundant fish stock surrounded by pristine coniferous forests with plentiful mushrooming and berry picking opportunities, lowland rivers and brooks with amazingly swift currents, waterfalls, rapids and rifts, man-made deep canyons (Ruskeala), internationally-renowned architectural landmarks (Kizhi and Valaam Monasteries) – everything listed above is Karelia.

Vacationers flock here all year round to relax from the hustle and bustle of city life, have a breath of healing forest air, spend time with a fishing rod on the lake-shore in the serenity of a warm summer, while in winter they can venture on a skiing trip to a quiet dormant forest or ride a snowmobile across the frozen rivers and lakes.



The Onego Lakeshore

In 2020 the Republic of Karelia will celebrate its 100th anniversary. Over the last decade extensive effort has been invested in the development of its tourism infrastructure, including the construction of excellent roads, comfortable hotel, and sports facilities, as well as the restoration of architectural landmarks.

In the modern world there is a growing demand for eco- and rural tourism. In this respect, Karelia fully meets the requirements of those city dwellers who would like to vacation in style as well as for those to whom outdoor camping is much more important than all of the high tech advances of the era.

Climate and Tourism Seasons

The climate of Karelia can be described as a transitional type from maritime to continental; it is moderately cold and very variable. The fluctuations in annual temperatures can measure from -35 Celsius (-31 Fahrenheit) in winter up to +35 Celsius (95 Fahrenheit) in summer. The determining factor impacting the climate is the proximity of the Northern seas, including the White Sea, the Barents Sea and the Baltic Sea.

This leads to excessive air humidity and significant rainfall, as well as permanent cloudiness in the fall. The maximum average monthly rainfall takes place during the months of July and August, while the maximum number of sunny days occur in June. January is considered the coldest month with an average temperature of -13 degrees Celsius (8,6 Fahrenheit), but because of the high humidity, it feels much colder. July is the warmest month with an average temperature of up to +17 degrees Celsius (62,6 Fahrenheit). The summer season lasts for about 2,5 to 3,5 months from late May through late August.

Over the last few years, the Republic of Karelia has done much to make the tourism season run all year round, however, summertime is still the high season. This is primarily because the “Kizhi” and “Valaam” Museum-Preserves remain the main tourist attractions of Karelia and they can be reached by waterway only during the summer navigation season through Lakes Onego and Ladoga.

The challenge of seasonality is being successfully tackled through the establishment of multi-seasonal tourism clusters, the construction of Alpine skiing resorts and the development of MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) event-driven tourism. Nonetheless, the highlight of Karelia is its northern wilderness, the Karelian taiga, which is beautiful any time of year. Here you find a multitude of opportunities for outdoor recreation, sports, and ecotourism.

April through May, when the rivers become clear of ice, is the best time for whitewater rafting. The season of the “White Nights” lasts from June through July. In September the season for picking cranberries, lingonberries and mushrooms begins. And of course the inexpensive prices for tourist packages serve as a huge bonus during the low season.

How to Get There

By Train

Getting here by train is a popular way to reach Karelia. There is a daily train from Moscow named the “Karelia” train (#18/19). The “Lastochka” (“Swallow”) train from St. Petersburg takes only five hours and the daily “Arctic” train, which connects the cities of Moscow and Murmansk, makes a stop in Petrozavodsk.

You can get to western Karelia by train from St. Petersburg to Kostomuksha through Lahdenpohja and Sortavala without stopping in Petrozavodsk. You can reach western and central Karelia by trains heading for Murmansk. The chief railway line built during WWI spans the entire republic from north to south. You can take a local train in Petrozavodsk to go to Medvezhyegorsk (www.rzd.ru). In 2019 they launched a new “Lastochka” type train route Pskov – Veliky Novgorod – Petrozavodsk.

By Car

Moscow and the northern provinces, including Karelia, are interconnected by an excellent grid of highways. If you are headed for Petrozavodsk from Moscow you need to hit either the M10 or M11 Highway, then turn onto the Kirishi Highway at the 582nd kilometer off the M10 Highway at the village of Zuyevo, which will take you to the P21 “Kola” Federal Highway connecting St. Petersburg and Moscow (some 1,000 kilometers). The distance between St. Petersburg and Petrozavodsk down the P21 Highway is 412 kilometers.

Further on, the “Kola” Federal Highway crosses several other bypass highways which can be used to reach communities in western, northern and central Karelia.



By Intercity Bus

There are regular intercity bus routes between Petrozavodsk and St. Petersburg (<http://avokzal.karelia.ru>). The bus terminal also offers routes to other communities of Karelia.

By Air

As of 2019, the “**Pobeda**” airline (www.pobeda.aero) operates daily round-trip flights between Moscow and **Petrozavodsk International Airport**. During the high season of May through October 2019, the “**Severstal**” airline (<https://severstal-avia.ru>) operates flights to the cities of Anapa, Arkhangelsk, Simferopol, Sochi, and Cherepovets. The airport runs regular 12-kilometer shuttle bus rides to the city of Petrozavodsk or you can always hire a taxi. You can book airfare on the above websites of the “Pobeda” or “Severstal” airlines as well as at the booking agencies in the capital of Karelia. You can book airfare in advance at the “Karelian Air Agency” in Petrozavodsk, located at 38 Lenin Prospect. For inquiries, feel free to call: +7 (8142) 78 30 78 or 76 15 51.

By waterway

In the summertime, the cruise lines operate comfortable cruise liners originating from either Moscow or St. Petersburg with stops in Valaam, Petrozavodsk, and Kizhi.

Local Transportation

Municipal buses and trolleybuses

The city of Petrozavodsk operates 20 bus and 7 trolleybus municipal routes. Fare is collected upon exiting from the bus. A trolleybus ride is cheaper than a bus. The map for bus and trolleybus routes is available for viewing at www.visitpetrozavodsk.ru. The other major cities of the republic operate public buses only, primarily according to a set schedule.

Intercity Bus Service

The main intercity bus terminal of the Republic of Karelia is located in Petrozavodsk at 3 Chapayeva Street (<http://avokzal.karelia.ru>). From here you can easily reach most major communities in the republic. The terminal also operates bus routes to St. Petersburg and Finland.

Taxis

Taxis are available in all major communities. Petrozavodsk has some 20 taxi companies, some of them accept reservations through taxi booking applications like “Yandex.Taxi,” “Gett,” “Maxim” and “Rutaxi.”

Majors highway of Karelia

The main highway of the republic is the P21 “Kola” Federal Highway which connects St. Petersburg and Murmansk. It spans nine districts of Karelia from north to south and stretches for 969 km. One can cover the entire territory of Karelia in less than 24 hours. Another important travel artery is the A-121 Federal Highway, which connects St. Petersburg – Sortavala – the Vyartsilya border crossing – Petrozavodsk. The A-119 Federal Petrozavodsk – Vologda Highway connects Karelia with Central Russia from the eastern part of the Republic.

There is another highway (part of the “Blue Highway” international tourism route) that for the most part runs along the shores of lakes and rivers. The route originates in Norway and runs through Sweden and Finland and ends in the Arkhangelsk region of Russia. The Karelian part of the route runs through 9 southern districts including the Petrozavodsk Urban Okrug (County).

In northern and central Karelia, a major part is played by a small number of bypass roads branching off from the “Kola” Highway to the west and to the border crossings with Finland. Such is the 86K-127 Louhi – Suoperän Highway, the 86K-3 Kem – Kalevala Highway and the 753rd kilometer of the “Kola” Kostomuksha – Vartius Highway. An SUV is the best type of vehicle to travel with in the northern and central areas of Karelia. At the same time, in dry weather you can always make it to your destination using a regular vehicle.

Car rental

The major international car rental companies like Hertz or Avis do not operate in Karelia. The local operator “Prokat #1” offers fully insured Nissan Almera vehicles (they are located at 9 Lenin Prospect in Petrozavodsk; for inquiries, please call: +7 (911) 400 6768 (<https://prokat.in>). Another rental company can be checked out on the website <https://auto4travel.ru>.

Helicopter flights

From December through May there are regular weekly helicopter flights from Petrozavodsk airport to the islands of Kizhi and Bolshoi Klimenty (village of Sennaya Guba). The type of a helicopter is a MI-8T. The maximum capacity of the flight is 22 passengers. The total cost of the flight is divided evenly by the number of passengers. The flying time is 30 to 40 minutes. At the same time, you can charter a private **helicopter** to fly around Karelia any time of year (<http://karelavia.ru>).

Travel by water

Vessels sail on Lake Onego from May through November. You can also charter a hovercraft (up to a 10 passenger capacity) any time of year for a trip to Kizhi, for example, at the “Vkizhi” agency by calling +7 (911) 625 9988 or visiting their website at <https://vkizhi-ptz.ru>. Many tour operators operate tour and pleasure boats on Lake Onego.

During the navigation season, there are two round-trip evening rides a week (Fridays and Sundays) along the route Petrozavodsk – Sennaya Guba – Kizhi – Velikaya Guba, originating at the Petrozavodsk Boat Terminal. That same terminal offers several hydrofoil rides a day to Kizhi Island. Tickets are available onboard the hydrofoil upon boarding or at the ticket office on the embankment (open daily from 9 am to 8 or 9 pm). For inquiries, please, please call: +7 (911) 400 4060.

From June through August the “**Russki Sever**” (“**Russian North**”) (<https://welcome-karelia.ru>) tour company offers one hour-long boat rides along the Western coast of Lake Onego. The rides depart several times daily from the Petrozavodsk Boat Terminal. Tickets are sold on the ship at boarding and at the company’s ticket booth on the embankment. For inquiries, please call: +7 (814) 228 5285.

The “**Russki Sever**” (“**Russian North**”) tour company also offers regular boat rides from the city of Kem (www.prichalrk.ru) and from Belomorsk (<https://welcome-karelia.ru>) to Bolshoi Solovetsky Island.

During the summertime, the tour operators of the city of Sortavala offer hydrofoil trips to Valaam Island, followed by a guided tour of the Valaam Monastery. For inquiries, please call: +7 (921) 629 3312 or 3313. You can also book a guided Valaam Monastery tour by hydrofoil from the “**Dlinny Bereg**” (“**Long-shore**”) resort from the town of Pitkäranta. For inquiries, please call: +7 (911) 403 4034, <http://d-bereg.com>. The trip schedule depends on how fast the available slots are filled. All the guided tours are agreed upon with the Pilgrimage Service of the Valaam Monastery (www.valaam.com).

In the coastal towns, you can make arrangements with the owners of private boats for tours of Lakes Onego or Ladoga, however, we recommend that you take advantage of the services offered by licensed tour operators.

Accommodations

Currently, the hotel industry of Karelia can offer three million comfortable hotel nights per year.

Considering the total number of tourists (some 1,3 million per year including independent travelers), there should be no problem finding accommodations in Karelia at any time of year. However, the factor of seasonality comes into play. When planning your summer travel or a trip during a



Sortavala. Hotel “Piipun Piha”

winter school break or in conjunction with a popular festival, we recommend making hotel reservations at least two to three months in advance.

Ethnic cuisine

Karelian cuisine has been shaped throughout centuries organically blending the culinary traditions of its neighbors – Russians, Finns, Estonians, Vep-sians – with its own national cooking.

Dietitians recognize that Karelian cuisine is one of the healthiest you can find, since many everyday dishes are cooked with organic ingredients – primarily fish, fresh vegetables, mushrooms and berries. In addition, their methods of cooking, like baking and braising in an oven, result in the preservation of the maximum amount of vitamins and nutrients. The Karelian language does not even have a word for “frying.”

Fish specials

The main ingredient of most of their meals has always been fish, which is not surprising for the residents of a land of rivers and lakes. Fish was boiled, baked in milk and sour cream, used to make pies with fish stuffing, braised in an oven, pickled, dry-cured, even fermented, and fish oil was extracted for medical use. The Karelians used fish scales to make jelly and they even baked caviar! Dried fish (locally referred to as “suschik”) was ground to make fish meal, which was turned into flour and used to make bread; and soup made from dried fish was considered an excellent remedy against colds. The most popular fish species was vendace or European cisco.

One of the most popular dishes was “**ukha**” or fish-soup (“**kalaruokka**” in the Karelian language as “**kala**” means fish and “**ruokka**” means food or “**yushka**”). The indigenous people could eat it several times a day. The main difference between Karelian fish-soup and the traditional Russian one is not only the special type of ingredients (which include Iceland moss, birch buds, and very often milk and cream thickened with flour and eggs) but also the fact that the cooked fish was removed and eventually cured while the broth was strained through a layer of birch embers before serving it on the table.

Such types of fish-soup as **kalakeitto** and **lohikeitto** are considered to be local delicacies. **Kalakeitto** includes fillets of whitefish or cod, while **lohikeitto** (cream-based) includes a salmon fillet. Normally, such types of soups are cooked in a cast-iron pot in an oven and then they would let it rest for 24 hours.

Pies with fish stuffing were often served as a second course or an entree. They were cooked from regular yeast dough with a stuffing made from cod or salmon fillet with onion rings or from ground pike fillet with onion and mushrooms.



Venison roast

Sometimes they would make a hole in the center of the pie, which would be filled with sour cream. Fish pies were also used in Karelian rituals, an essential dish for any festive or memorial ceremony.

Make sure to try **fish braised in an oven** under a milk-and-egg sauce.

One of the most widespread dishes is **fish Karelian-style** because it is easy to cook and at the same time it tastes delicious. You can use any type of fish, most often cod, which is covered with water along with potatoes, onions, and spices and braise it for some 30 to 40 minutes.

A popular appetizer is a combination of **salted fish** with boiled potatoes.

Meat specials

You can hardly find any meat dishes in indigenous Karelian cuisine. The ancestors of the contemporary Karelians would eat meat only on holidays, as well as in winter or during the hay mowing season. Fresh-killed meat, whether it be moose, beef, bear's flesh, or lean mutton would be corned or dry-cured so that it could be brought along when working either in the field or in the forest, as well as when setting off on a long journey.

The rapid development of cattle-breeding in the early 20th century impacted the menu of Karelians, predominantly, residents of urban areas. Here, unlike in the rural areas, the menu came to be dominated by meat rather than fish dishes.

Nowadays, the Karelian restaurants offer you several options for meat entrees, which are very often served with lingonberry sauce. Some of them include a combination of several kinds of meat including beef, mutton, and pork. It is referred to as "**Roast Karelian-style.**" We would also recommend to you a unique, delicious dish called "**Kalalatika**" – a potato casserole made of onion, a herring fillet, pork, a mix of flour, eggs, and milk, and very often sprinkled with grated cheese (the dish is also delicious without adding pork).

Pastry

The famous **Karelian “kalitki”** are available not only in Russia but also in the Scandinavian countries, where they are referred to as “Karelian pies.” To a certain extent they are similar to “Shanga,” offered in the Russian North and Urals; however, the latter look bigger and more like a curd tart, because the edges of the dough are not crimped.

The word “kalitki” is probably derived from the Finnish word *kalittoa*, meaning “spread,” which is a kind of traditional Finnish pastry. The spread is applied to the surface of the dough. Also popular is the legend that the name is derived from the ancient Russian word “kalita,” meaning a wallet, because the shape does indeed look like a wallet. The kalitki stuffing can be cereal or mashed potatoes, but the most delicious kalitki are the ones stuffed with berries.

Aside from fish pies and “kalitki” Karelian women would also make pies with mushroom fillings and pies out of unsalted dough with a simple stuffing like vegetables, pickled cucumbers, cereal, cottage cheese, and sometimes simply sugar. Equally popular are various pittas with fillings, for example, “**skantsy**” or “pies for a son-in-law” (which are in effect pancakes). Normally, the dish is shaped like a crescent out of rolled rye dough (hence the name) to treat the visiting groom and prospective in-laws when they come to see the family of the bride. After rolling the dough the pitta was filled, folded twofold and baked. The filling for “skantsy” was normally cereal, but nowadays they are usually made with cheese, sugar and honey filling.

If you put “skantsy” pittas made of rolled dough into an oven or on a chargrill without filling, and then stuff it with cereal and make a roll out of it before serving, this substantial meal would be called “**sulchini**,” which makes an excellent breakfast! To cajole the goblin, the host would eat the “**sulchini**” by breaking it into two halves and treating his or her table companion with the other half.

Pancakes are also a very popular dish of Karelian cuisine. For breakfast, you may be offered “**kapkarat**” which are unsalted pancakes with rice or millet porridge.

Vegetables

In the old days, the turnip was the most commonplace vegetable, always referred to as the second bread. In the 20th century, it was replaced by potatoes and cabbage, but some restaurants still offer rutabaga salad or rutabaga on the side.



Traditional pastries – famous Karelian kalitki

Drinks

The traditional Karelian drink is an **herbal tea**. Only well-to-do Karelians could afford natural tea and coffee in the 19th century. In western Karelia they would drink coffee for breakfast, lunch, and dinner normally with a grain of salt. The everyday drink was grain **kvass** or kvass made from turnips. Nowadays, Karelians will offer you **morse**, a type of fruit drink, or kvass fermented from natural berries, as well as various **liqueurs** fermented from the same type of berries or herbs.

Outdoor Recreation

The chief attraction of Karelia is its northern wilderness which is beautiful all year round. Here you can always find a great number of options for outdoor recreation and sports.

Winter Outdoor Recreation

Alpine skiing has become increasingly popular over the last few years. That is why every year they have been building brand new expertly developed downhill slopes and modern tourist facilities. In Karelia you can enjoy your vacation at two Alpine centers that can handle both beginners and expert skiers.

The “Yalgora” Alpine Skiing Center

The “Yalgora” Alpine Skiing Center is located 15 km away from Petrozavodsk in a picturesque setting on the banks of the narrow Yalguba River. This is the first downhill skiing resort in Karelia equipped with a ski lift that has chairs designed to hold four skiers. The length of the slopes is up to 800 m with the elevation range measuring 100 m.



“Yalgora” Alpine Skiing Center



Whitewater rafting down the Uksunyoki river

Accommodations are available in cabins and in a hostel.

- Located in the village of Pinguba in the Prionezhsk District
 ☎ (814) 233 0300
www.yalgora.ru; www.yal-ski.ru

“Kallivo Park” Alpine Skiing Center

The center is located north of the city of Sortavala. The length of the slopes is 580 m with the elevation range measuring 110 m. Downhill training trails, cross-country trails and trails for sliding on an inner tube, a snowboard park, skiing lessons, gear rental and a cafe are all available.

- Located in the township of Khelyulya in the Sortavala District | ☎ (921) 223 3399 | <https://kallivopark.ru>

Year-round Outdoor Recreation

“Ruskeala” Mountain Park

This destination has grown very popular over the last few years offering diverse diving adventures, climbing in the “Kubik (Cube)” rope park and on a rock-climbing wall, and riding on a zipline or going bungee jumping. In the wintertime you can go on a tour of the surroundings

on a snowmobile and ride the “Funny Banana” winter sled.

- <https://ruskeala.ru>

“Pirate Bay” Wakeboarding Park

This park is located 5 km south of Petrozavodsk on the Lake Onego shore. Experienced instructors will train you to do snowkiting in the winter, and wakeboarding and kitesurfing in the summer. Gear rental is also available.

- ☎ (911) 411 5848
<https://onego-pirates.ru>

“ONEGO” Diving Center

The “Onego” Diving Center has been operating since 2006. They will train you to go underwater not only in Karelia but in other countries as well and offer all levels of training from beginners to professionals. Upon completion, you will be issued a certificate which conforms to international standards.

- Located at 50 Kommunistov Str. in Petrozavodsk | ☎ (921) 228 60 50
www.onegodive.ru

Fishing

Karelia is a veritable paradise for fishing. Both in winter and summer in rivers, lakes or the White Sea, fishing

from shore or a boat, here not a single angler will be left without a good catch. Numerous fishing festivals and competitions are hugely popular, for example, the “Ladoga Skerries” International Fishing Festival held in Sortavala in August and the “Kalakunda” Festival held in Petrozavodsk in September. At the winter fishing festival in Sorokskaya Bay of the White Sea held in March in the city of Belomorsk they hold such contests as “The Biggest Smelt,” “The Biggest Navaga” (“Eleginus Navaga”) and “The Heaviest Catch.” Separate contests are held for ice-holes drillers and family team contests.

At all such events, you can taste authentic Karelian or Pomor “ukha” or fish-soup, try fish pies, enjoy the folk and theatrical shows and learn the secrets of fishing from experienced anglers. The most sought after fish species that populate Karelian waters are lake char, grayling, whitefish, trout, and zander. The most prevalent are pike, ide, roach, perch, bream, and vendace. Before you travel, we recom-

mend that you familiarize yourself with the rules and regulations for fishing in whatever region you will be visiting.

The Karelian Fishing Club

- www.fish.karelia.ru

The Central Forum of Anglers

- www.rusfishing.ru

Summer Outdoor Recreation

Back during the Soviet era, Karelia was the Mecca for devotees of whitewater **rafting**. A unique feature of Karelian lowland rivers lies in the fact that due to the landscapes being shaped by glaciers, they have many rapids, riffles, and shallows of various classes of difficulty much as you would find in typical mountain rivers.

Fans of **trekking** and hiking will appreciate the beauty of the local forests. Many hotels offer expeditions designed for several days led by experienced guides. The Ladoga lakeshore and Karelian heartland are also popular destinations for **mountain bikers**.



Campfire at night

**INFO**

Recreation for children

Karelia is an excellent destination for family recreation with children of all ages both in urban communities and in pristine wildlife areas.

- **“The Polar Circle” Children’s Camp**

The children’s camp that offers educational and adventure programs on the coast of the White Sea, including summer and winter (under the ice) diving, horseback riding, dog sledding, reindeer riding, fishing and trekking. Housing is offered in comfortable cabins. The location of the camp is in the village of Nilmoguba in the Louhi District. Moscow office: ☎ (495) 925 7799, <http://www.pkrug.ru>

- **The Estate of Talvi Ukko**

Talvi Ukko, the Karelian Santa, and Lumiki, the Snow Maiden, live only twenty kilometers from Petrozavodsk. Aside from participating in games, you can also visit a dog breeding kennel, a reindeer farm, take a tour of the Miracle Forest that features figures of wild animals, have tea with “kalitki” in the Tea House, and examine the tent of a Sami – the indigenous ethnic group of the Arctic North. The location is in the village of Chalna in the Pryazha District, ☎ (921) 627 0774,

daily from 10 am to 5 pm,
<http://talvi-ukko.ru>

- **“Norway Park” Rope Park**

“The Karelia” park is a franchise of “Norway Park.” It has four trails of various levels of difficulty. In the wintertime the park offers rides on inner tubes on five trails. A ski lift is also available. Located at 47A Lesnoi Prospect in Petrozavodsk, The “Lotos Plaza” Shopping Mall, ☎ (911) 054 1441, <http://new.norwaypark.ru>

- **The Karelian Zoo**

The Karelian Zoo features some 600 species of wild animals and birds. The zoo is located in the township of Kirkkolahti in the Sortavala District, ☎ (800) 100 8841, daily from 10 am to 7 pm,
<http://kareliazoo.ru>

- **“The Secret Trails of the Land of KALEVALA” Interactive Park**

Open in the summertime at “Ruskeala” Mountain Park. <https://ruskeala.ru>

- **“The White Runa” Husky Breeding Kennel**

A mini-zoo and dog sledding are available. Open daily from 11 am to 9 pm. Located on the highway toward Vyartsilya in the Sortavala District; follow the sign, ☎ (921) 626 5195

Recreation at Health Resorts

There is no question that any trip to Karelia that involves spending time outdoors will prove an effective recreation for those who are tired of the daily hustle and bustle of the urban environment.

At the same time, the republic offers specialized health resorts equipped with the most advanced methods of treatment and medical equipment.

"Martsialnie Vody" Spa

This was the first-ever spa in Russia established by Peter I in 1719. Therapy is offered with unique natural remedies including anti-bacterial ferriferous mineral waters and sulfide "gazobersky" brand curative mud. They are used to treat diseases of the urinary tract, the gastrointestinal tract, the heart and vascular system, low iron, disorders of the nervous system and the muscular-skeletal system, as well as gynecological disorders. The spa developed short-term programs of rejuvenation,

weight loss, and body cleansing as well as anti-stress programs. The facilities include three buildings which hold 278 rooms of various types, a cafeteria, a spa-center, a swimming pool, a gym, a daycare room, and a concierge service where you can book a sightseeing tour. Gear rental is also available.

- The sales office is located at 3 Dzerzhinskogo Str., Suite 6, in Petrozavodsk.
- The spa is located in the township of Martsialnie Vody in the Kondopoga District, ☎ (800) 100 1719
<http://марцводы.рф>

The "Kivach" Clinic

Established in 1996, the clinic is located in a pine forest on the shore of the picturesque Lake Pertozero. Therapy is offered for obesity, hypertension, diabetes, asthma, stress, diseases of the muscular-skeletal system and GI tract, gynecological and urological disorders. The clinic developed a unique method of body cleansing at the cellular level from impurities and toxins using the most advanced methods of diagnostic and high tech medical equipment. The popular specialty of the clinic is plastic surgery. The clinic has five buildings that hold 80 rooms of various types. Each room has space for procedures and an infra-red sauna. The facilities include a spa center, a swimming pool, a restaurant, a gym and a concierge service where you can book a sightseeing tour.



"Kivach" Clinic





A vibrant green field with yellow wildflowers and a wooden structure on the left. The field is filled with tall green grass and numerous small yellow flowers. On the left side, there is a wooden structure, possibly a roof or a fence, with a white object partially visible below it. The background is a solid green color.

THE REGION AND ITS PEOPLE

Facts and Figures

- **The official name:** Republic of Karelia, Karelia, Karjala
- **Area:** 180,520 square kilometers
- **Population:** 617,920
- **Population density:** 3,4 people per square kilometer
- **Capital:** Petrozavodsk
- **Largest cities:** Petrozavodsk (279,000), Kondopoga (30,000), Kostomuksha (29,000), Segezha (26,000)
- **Official language:** Russian. The Karelian, Vepsian and Finnish languages enjoy support from the federal government.



- **Demographics:** 76,6 % Russians, 9,2 % Karelians, 5,2 % Belorussians, 2,7 % Ukrainians, 2 % Finns, 0,7 % Vepsians
- **Time zone:** UTC +3 (Moscow time)

Geographic Location

The Republic of Karelia is located in the northwest of the European part of Russia, as well as in the northwest of the East European (Russian) plain. In the west, it borders on Finland (726 kilometers), in the south – the Leningrad and Vologda Regions, in the north – the Murmansk Region, and in the east – the Arkhangelsk Region. The vast coast of the White Sea is located in the northeast, while the shores of Lakes Ladoga and Onego, which are similar in length, are located in the south. The republic stretches 660 kilometers from north to south, and 400 kilometers from west to east (in the widest southern part of the republic). The distance between Petrozavodsk and Moscow is 925 kilometers, while the distance to St. Petersburg is 401 kilometers.

Terrain

Scientists would call Karelia «a mountainous land with lowland terrain.» The nature of Karelia is indeed lowland, but it is interspersed with multiple hills, lakes, marshes, rivers, ridges, and rocks. Some 50% of the territory is covered by forests, while some 25% is covered by water. The republic has some 27,000 rivers (many of them feature rapids, waterfalls and swift currents similar to mountain rivers) and 60,000 lakes, including the largest lake in Europe: Lake Ladoga (50% of the water basin), and Lake Onego (80% of the water basin).

Along the border of Finland stretches the Maanselkä Ridge. One of the spurs into Karelia is the Western Karelian Upland, which features the 417-meter high Vottovaara Mountain.

Another spur is located in the far northwest of the republic, featuring the Nuorunen Mountain peak (576 meters high), the tallest peak of Karelia. South of Petrozavodsk is the beginning of the Olonets Plateau with elevations up to 300 meters. Along the Karelian coast of the White Sea lies the marshy White Sea Lowland.

Administrative Structure of Karelia

Karelia has two urban okrugs (administrative units): the Urban Okrug of Petrozavodsk and the Urban Okrug of Kostomuksha, along with 16 districts, three of which are ethnic-specific – Kalevala, Olonets, and Pryazha. The city of Kostomuksha and four northern districts enjoy the status of the areas of the Far North. All the other areas of Karelia enjoy the benefits of the areas of the Far North, meaning their residents are eligible for extra benefits because they live in harsh climatic conditions.

Political System

The executive power in the Republic of Karelia is vested in the head of the Republic of Karelia, the government of the Republic of Karelia and other agencies of the executive branch. As of 2012, the head of the Republic of Karelia is elected for a five-year term of office by secret ballot in a general election by the citizens of the republic. Artur Parfenchikov won the 2017 election, his term ends in 2022.

In 2016 they re-instituted the office of the prime minister, who is the first deputy of the head of the Republic. The head of the republic nominates a candi-

date for the job and the nomination requires the approval by the legislative assembly of the Republic of Karelia. Currently, Alexander Chepik holds the prime minister's post. The head of the Republic of Karelia is also a member of the government. The legislative branch in the Republic of Karelia is vested in the unicameral legislative assembly, which consists of 36 legislators (only 17 work there permanently; others combine it with another job). The assembly is elected in a general election both on the party lists and in single-seat constituencies.

Economy and Tourism

The chief industries of the Karelian economy are non-ferrous metallurgy, mining, timber, and paper and pulp manufacturing. Almost all of them use some 50 types of local raw materials recovered from 400 local deposits. Out of 24 cities and townships, almost half are recognized as a single industry community. Several products made in Karelia make a strategic contribution to the overall economy of the Russian Federation. For example, 56 Karelian fish farms grow some 70% of all Russian trout and some 20,000 tons of this delicacy is sold throughout Russia in grocery outlets. Also, Karelia produces more than 26% of iron ore pellets, 20% of paper, 12% of pulp and 60% of paper bags nationwide.

The location of the region on an international border enables Karelian industries to focus on exports; thus more than 50% of all their products are sold internationally. Nonetheless, the unemployment rate of 9% remains pretty high.

Historic Overview

7th to 6th millennia BC. The first human settlement on the territory of Karelia following the Ice Age.

End of 4th millennium BC through Anno Domini. Start of copper mining and metalworking in Pegrem in the area of Zaonezhye, the oldest deposit in Europe.

2nd to 1st millennia BC. The tribes of the Finno-Ugric group on the territory of Karelia: the Sami (Laplanders), Korela, Chud (Vepsians, Veps). The Slavic people begin to penetrate the Karelian lands.

7th to 11th centuries. The expeditions of Vikings to the Karelian lands.

2nd half of the 11th century. The first mention of Korela (in the course of a Lithuanian expedition against them) in the Novgorodian birch bark manuscripts.

12th to 13th centuries. The territory of modern-day Karelia joined the Obonezhsky Pyatina (District) of Veliky Novgorod (Novgorod the Great).

1187. The devastation of Sigtuna, capital of Sweden by Korela and Novgorodians.

1227. Baptism of Korela by the Novgorodian Prince Yaroslav Vsevolodovich.

1228. The first mention of the city of Olonets in a chronicle.

1277–1278. The campaigns by the Novgorodian Prince Dmitry Alexandrovich against Korela (“massacre Karela and occupy their land”). The establishment of the Karelian land as part of the Obonezhski Pyatina (District) governed by a hired prince or governor.

End of 13th–14th centuries. The Swedish-Novgorodian Wars. Uprising by the Korela against the Novgorodians.

2nd half of the 14th century. The Novgorodians farm out the Karelian lands to Lithuanian Princes.

1323. The Treaty of Oreshek between Veliky Novgorod (Novgorod the Great) and Sweden. The first mention of the Karelian Pogost (Administrative District).

1419. The first mention of the village of Soroka (present-day city of Belomorsk).

1391. The founding of the Paleostrovsky Monastery.

1478. Incorporation of Veliky Novgorod (Novgorod the Great) into the Russian State by Ivan III.

1st half of 16th century. The territory of present-day Karelia is divided into the Vodskaya Pyatina (Korela Uezd) and the Obonezhskaya Pyatina (Administrative Districts).

1583–1595, 1611–1721. The territory of the Korela Uezd (Administrative District) becomes part of Sweden (Kexholms län Administrative Unit).

1649. Construction of the Olonets Fortress. The city becomes the capital of the Olonets Uezd (Administrative District).

1670. The beginning of metal smelting in Zaonezhye Peninsula.

1702. Construction of the “Czar’s Road” from the White Sea to Povenets. Establishment of the first Olonets metallurgical facility by Peter I.

1703. Foundation of Petrovsky Sloboda (Settlement) that eventually grew to become Petrozavodsk.

1708. The territory of Karelia was made part of the Ingermanland Governorate.

1719. Peter I established the first spa in Russia named “Martsialnie Vody”.

1721. The Treaty of Nystad. The Korela Uezd (Administrative Unit) is returned to Russia.

1774. Establishment of the Alexander Canon and Foundry Factory in Petrozavodsk Sloboda.

1777. The former Petrozavodsk Sloboda is officially granted the status of a city named Petrozavodsk.

1784. Petrozavodsk becomes the capital of the Olonets Governorate. Gavriila Derzhavin is appointed its first governor.

1830. Elias Lönnrot's tour of Karelia. Publication of "Kalevala".

1916. The railway is built connecting St. Petersburg and Murmansk running through Karelia and Petrozavodsk.

1920–1923. The Autonomous Karelian Labor Commune with its capital in Petrozavodsk becomes part of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic.

1923–1926. The Autonomous Karelian Soviet Socialist Republic (AKSSR) becomes part of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic.

1933. Inauguration of the White Sea-Baltic Canal.

1936–1940, 1956–1991. Karelian ASSR was part of the RSFSR.

1938. The cities of Belomorsk, Kondopoga and Medvezhyegorsk are founded.

1939–1940. Russo-Finnish "Winter" War.

1940. The Treaty of Peace between the Soviet Union and Finland. The establishment of the Karelo-Finnish Soviet Socialist Republic (Karelo-Finnish SSR), incorporating the present-day Lakhdenpohya District, the Louhi District (partially), the Pitkyaranta District,

the Sortavala District and the Suoyarvi District.

1941–1944. Occupation of the greater area of Karelia by Finnish forces. The city of Belomorsk is the temporary capital of the Karelo-Finnish SSR.

1966. Inauguration of the Kizhi Historic and Architectural Museum.

1982. Inauguration of the Kostomuksha Mining and Ore Dressing Mill.

1983. The founding of the city of Kostomuksha.

1990. Declaration on State Sovereignty of the Karelian ASSR.

1991. Renaming of the Karelian ASSR into the Republic of Karelia.

1992. The signing of the Federative Agreement by the delegation of the Republic of Karelia.

1993. Approval of the state symbols of the Republic of Karelia and the adoption of the Constitution.

1994–2004. The Vepsian Ethnic Volost (Administrative Unit) with its capital in the village of Sheltozero.

2001. Institution of the post of the head of the Republic of Karelia. The legislative assembly becomes unicameral.

2006. The adoption of the constitutional provision that the names of "The Republic of Karelia", "Karelia" and "Karjala" carry equal legal force.

2015. Petrozavodsk is bestowed the title of "The City of Military Glory".

2017. The general election elects Artur Parfenchikov head of the Republic of Karelia (until 2022).

2018. Results of the tourist count for the year show the number of visitors to the "Ruskeala" Mountain Park exceeded the number of visitors to the "Kizhi" and "Valaam" Museum-Preserves combined. That number stands at 330,000.

**St. Nicolas Skeet
of the Valaam Monastery**



ITINERARIES AROUND KARELIA



PETROZAVODSK

Highlights!

- Climb aboard the ancient wooden vessel at the “Polar Odysseus” Maritime Museum › p. 45
- Take a selfie at the “I Love Petrozavodsk” Sign on Lenin Prospect › p. 56
- Walk along the Lake Onego Embankment › p. 61
- Whisper your wish to the “Tree of Wishes” Sculpture on the Onego Lakefront › p. 62
- Enjoy authentic Karelian cuisine at the “Karelian Gornitsa” Restaurant (poetic for “Karelian Chamber”) › p. 69



Petrozavodsk, the capital of Karelia, is located on the picturesque shore of Petrozavodsk "Guba" or the Bay of Lake Onego, which juts into the mainland and is surrounded by a dense forest. It is the largest community of the Republic of Karelia with a population of some 280,000. Petrozavodsk is the most important economic, scientific and cultural center not only in Karelia but also in the entire Russian North, and, it is also one of the greenest cities in Russia.

The City of Military Glory

Archaeologists have discovered settlements within the confines of present-day Petrozavodsk dating back to the Neolithic and Mesolithic eras from the 7th to the 3rd millennia BC. During the Middle Ages, apparently there was no human settlement here until the 17th century. September 1, 1703, is considered to be the date of the foundation of the present-day city, when they broke ground in the estuary of the Lososinka River to establish the Shuisky State Weapons Factory that made canons and cannonballs.

At the beginning of the 18th century, Russia entered the Northern War with then-mighty Sweden. The Russian army and navy were desperately short of quality artillery and small arms. The outcome of the war was destined to determine whether Russia would be able to gain a foothold on the shore of the Baltic Sea. The factories in the Ural Mountains were located too far away from the battlefields and, therefore, when Peter I received a report in 1701 on potential deposits of copper and iron ore on the northwestern shore of Lake Onego, he immediately ordered the dispatch of an expe-

dition to the area for geological prospecting.

The prospecting did confirm the initial findings. The high degree of importance that Peter I attached to the project is evidenced by the fact that he appointed his favorite, Prince Alexander Menshikov, to be in charge of construction. Menshikov was also the Governor-General of St. Petersburg, the recently founded northern capital of Russia. He personally took part in breaking the ground for the Shuisky Factory. Already in 1704, the four blast furnaces began their operations at full capacity and the factory, which was renamed the Petrovsky (Peter's) Iron and Weapons Factory, made its first products.

Later on, the factory mastered the manufacture of not only military hardware (canons, anchors, rifles, pistols, bayonets, daggers) but also civilian products (shovels, pitchforks, candle holders, horseshoes, nails, etc.). The factory kept being retooled regularly. As the operation expanded, the factory town of Petrovskaya Sloboda (Peter's Settlement) also grew in size. When Russia emerged victorious in the Northern War, the settlement had already more than 4,000 residents and it was the

Monument to Peter I



largest populated area on the Olonets Isthmus (between Lakes Ladoga and Onego).

Peter I came here several times, so for him a wooden palace with a balcony was built, as well as a pond with fish. They also started a school that trained people from the lower social classes to become miners and steel workers. Petrovskaya Sloboda consisted of two neighborhoods. The left bank of Lososinka was home to merchants, military officers and officials. It was also the location for various government offices, retail outlets, and barracks. The neighborhood on the right bank was already called Zareka back then and was home to staff and seasonal factory workers.

After the war, the large demand for canons subsided and the factory gradually went into decline. Many experienced workers were transferred to other facilities. Petrovsky (Peter's) Factory was finally shut down and its

last blast furnace fell apart in 1740 because it was so decrepit. However, the idle time did not last long. By the mid-1750's the revamped facilities started smelting copper again, which was shipped to St. Petersburg to mint coins. Then the Russo-Turkish War broke out at the end of the 1760's and Empress Catherine II ordered the resumption of canon production. In the early 1770's massive construction was started on the banks of Lososinka. The decision was made to erect new manufacturing facilities and civilian structures further upstream. The 1774 imperial decree named the new operation the Alexandrovsky Canon and Foundry Factory in honor of the Saint Prince Alexander Nevsky and that same year they cast the first canon.

In 1775 the ensemble of the Tsirkulyarnaya (Circular) Square (now Lenin Square) started to be developed, while in 1777 the former Petrovskaya Sloboda was officially named the city of Petrozavodsk. Petrozavodsk became the center of the Olonets Governorate (later to become Olonets Province), replacing Olonets as the provincial capital. The famous Russian poet Gavrila Derzhavin was the governor of the province between 1784 and 1785.

Up to the second half of the 19th century, the Alexandrovsky Factory was one of the most technologically advanced in the whole of the Russian Empire. In 1788, the first Russian railroad was built (the in-house "cast-iron train on wheels" with a length of 160 meters) and an in-house steam engine (1789). In 1798 the factory se-



Rotunda on Lake Onego embankment

cured the exclusive right to make standards of weight, i.e., weights and scales of various types. In 1819 the city was visited by Emperor Alexander I, while in 1858 – by Emperor Alexander II. By 1874, after 100 years of work, the Alexandrovsky Factory had produced more than 37,000 cannon barrels. At the same time, the city of Petrozavodsk was growing, along with its main industry.

In the 19th century, massive stone construction got underway. As before, the officials, merchants, and servicemen would settle on the left bank of Lososinka (the contemporary “Central” District), while the factory workers would settle on the right bank, where the most skilled workers were allowed to build their private houses in the area south of Zareka (the contemporary “Golikovka” District). Over the first half of the 19th century, the population of Petrozavodsk reached 10,000.

In 1860, passenger steamboat lines were launched to link the city with St. Petersburg. A decade later they launched telegraph communications in the province, while in the early 20th century Petrozavodsk saw the inauguration of a telephone station. In 1916, the train station of Petrozavodsk welcomed the first train coming from Murmansk. Thanks to the opening of a great number of various industrial facilities, the population of Petrozavodsk increased to 280,000 over decades of Soviet power. The fields of culture and education received a substantial boost with the establishment of a university and specialty colleges, several theaters and a philharmonic.

In addition, massive housing construction was undertaken.

Major damage was inflicted on Petrozavodsk during the fighting in WWII. Between 1941 and 1944 the city was occupied by Finnish forces who set up 7 concentration camps for the adult male population. By the time the city was liberated in 1944, the camps held more than 20,000 prisoners, including children. Following the start of the offensive by Soviet troops during the Svir-Petrozavodsk Operation, the Finns were compelled to retreat from Petrozavodsk in June of 1944. Before their retreat, the occupiers blew up all the critical facilities of the city’s infrastructure, while the city itself was turned into a continuous minefield. In honor of the liberation of Petrozavodsk on June 28, 1944, the local population celebrates the **Day of the City** on the last Saturday of June.

1 A Walking Tour of the City

Itinerary:

Railway Station › **Gagarin Square** › **Lenin Prospect** › **Levashovsky Boulevard** › **Lake Onego Embankment** › **Karl Marx Prospect** › **Kirov Square** › **Lenin Square**

Map: page 57

Duration: one to two days

Useful tip: However bright the sunshine may be, we recommend keeping in mind the constant cool breeze from Lake Onego and dressing warmly during a stroll along the lakefront.

The start of the tour

Guests coming to Karelia by train begin getting to know the city from the **Petrozavodsk train station 1**, whose building is topped with a tall 17-meter spire. It was built in 1955 in the style of neoclassicism by the architect Victor Tsyulin. The station is unquestionably the gem of downtown Petrozavodsk. The interior is richly decorated with molding and the ceiling is supported by columns of the ornate Corinthian order. The facade is adorned with a central and lateral avant-corps incorporating sunken porticos, also featuring the columns of the Corinthian order.

In the center of **Gagarin Square** is a small plaza. To the left of the station is a luggage locker room and to the right is the **"Piter Inn"** four-star hotel. The first floors and the basements of the surrounding residential blocks are home to food service and retail outlets. For those wishing to try Karelian cuisine right upon arrival, we recommend stopping by the **"Becker"** franchise coffee shop operating round the clock. It is located behind the luggage locker room at 2 Gagarin Square. For inquiries, please call: +7 (814)272-07-20 (<https://bekker-ptz.ru>). Here **!** you can try freshly baked kalitki pies with different fillings and have an amazing cup of refreshing coffee or tea.

The **"Fusion" Restaurant** offers a variety of menu items including Karelian dishes as well as European and Japanese cuisine (33 Krasnoarmeiskaya Str., <https://fusion-ptz.ru/o-restorane>).

The **Petrozavodsk Tourist Information Center** is located at 38 Lenin Prospect (Mo–Fr from 10 am to 5 pm, www.visitpetrozavodsk.ru).

Lenin Prospect

The construction of the train station and the improvements to Gagarin Square finalized the creation of the fitting architectural ensemble on Lenin Prospect (Avenue), which constitutes the main artery of the Central District and of the whole city. It is as straight as an arrow, only 1,8 kilometers long facing the Onego lakefront.

Left of Lenin Avenue behind the "Aura" Shopping Mall and Anokhin Plaza, one can view an unconventional 1996 sculpture of **"The Fullerene Molecule"** with a fountain in front of it. It was unveiled at the beginning of the small **Students' Boulevard 2** opposite the main building of Petrozavodsk University (1940–1950) and is a popular hangout for young people.

It is a frequent venue for outdoor concerts and in May serves as the venue for the ceremonial opening of the "Season of City Fountains."

In 2018, immediately beyond the boulevard, the installation of the **"I ♥ Petrozavodsk"** sign became an instant draw for multiple selfies.

Next door, you are welcome to relax at the cozy **"Crema Caffe"** at 26A Anokhina Street.

The Students' Boulevard leads to Krasnaya (Red) Street and then across the street to the **50th Anniversary of the Pioneers' Organization Park** located in the floodplain of the Neglinka River, one of the most beautiful in the city. In 1977, a gallery was opened here dedicated to the **recipients of the Star of the Hero of the Soviet Union** who were born in Karelia.



Petrozavodsk

- 1** Railway Station
- 2** Students' Boulevard
- 3** City Arts Center
- 4** "Severnaya" ("Northern") Hotel
- 5** Levashevsky Boulevard
- 6** Historic District
- 7** Lake Onego Embankment

- 8** "Birth of the City" Sculpture
- 9** "Pribrezhny" ("lakefront") Park
- 10** Monument to Peter I
- 11** Petrovsky (Peter's) Garden
- 12** Sergey Kirov Square
- 13** Alexander Nevsky Cathedral
- 14** Gallery of Industrial History
- 15** Lenin Square

It is hard to get to Besov Nos Cape by land since there is no road leading there at all.

The best option for regular tourists is to travel from Pudozh to Shalsky Township, located in the Vodly river estuary, either by taxi or by public bus. For a moderate fee, local residents who own boats will gladly take you to “Besov Nos” (there is a 15-kilometer direct route). Many tour companies operate one-day waterway tours here covering a distance of 95 kilometers.

Pialma 15

Pialma is an ancient village on the shore of Lake Onego in the Pudozh District located 100 km north of Pudozh down the A119 Highway. The village itself is a historical monument. It has preserved its historic layout and development on the banks of the river and has a small museum of regional history. The cemetery features the 18th century **St. Elijah Chapel**. Every year in early August during the feast of St. Elijah a regional folk festival is held drawing numerous guests from many countries.

The “Vodlozero” National Park 16

The “Vodlozero” National Park occupies a vast area of the Ileksa River basin that flows through the Arkhangelsk region and the Pudozh District of Karelia. In the Pudozh District, the entire area around Lake Vodlozero, one of the largest lakes in Karelia, is under preservation. The area of Vodlozero is an important historical and cultural region of the Russian North and is now witnessing a revival of its ancient cultural traditions.

The park provides  great conditions for outdoor recreation, including whitewater rafting, hiking, skiing, fishing, bird watching, etc. This is an excellent location for outdoor recreation away from the hustle and bustle of city living, offering visitors the opportunity to get back to nature and enjoy a pristine environment. For details, please feel free to reach out to the park’s welcome center at <http://vodlozero.ru>.

The travel distance from Pudozh to the welcome center in the village of Kuganovolok is 70 km.



The unique village of Pialma

NORTHERN KARELIA

Highlights!

- We highly recommend a waterway tour of the protected Lake Kamennoye › p. 144
- Take a tour of the Samovar Museum in the hamlet of Kormilo › p. 145
- Climb the tallest peak of the coast of the White Sea on the island of Russky Kuzov › p. 156



The northern areas of Karelia are the continental coastal areas of the White Sea and Karelian Pomorie; they are scarcely populated compared to the south of the republic. The greater part of the mainland is covered by rugged forests with mushroom and berry fields, marshes with berry fields, greater and smaller lakes, rivers with rapids and sand bars, brooks and streams.

The cozy, sparsely populated hamlets featuring age-old methods of building and planning are located on the lake shores, away from the main highways and railway connecting the major communities that are few and far between. Next to the hamlet, there are fields and meadows cleared away from the forests and marshes. Part of the territory is protected woodland, including vast national parks, along with nature preserves for the flora and fauna of the region.

Despite the harsh climatic conditions, people started settling here almost immediately after the disappearance of the gigantic glacier. Being rich in game and fish, settling here was made easier thanks to the abundance of waterways – which served as the chief transportation arteries in ancient times. Amid forests and marshes, archaeologists have discovered many settlements of primitive people of the stone age and later epochs.

Later on, the Samis (Laplanders) settled here. At the end of the first and beginning of the second centuries, the Karelians started relocating here from the southern areas, and somewhat later – the Russians from Veliky Novgorod. Aside from fishing and hunting, mushroom and berry picking, farming was developed, while in the northernmost areas – reindeer breeding.

It is not by chance that it was in this very place that the famous Karelian

rune singers lived and the “Kalevala” epic was recorded. The numerous sacred stones known as “seidis” supported by small “leg-shaped” rocks serve as a testament to the ancient inhabitants of Northern Karelia. The mysterious stone objects, presumably ritualistic, include the display of the foreheads of rams with numerous petroglyphs among other things. They are particularly numerous in Karelian Pomorie on the coast of the White Sea.

The contemporary Karelian coast of the White Sea stretches from Kandalaksha Bay in the north to Onega Guba (Bay) in the south. Practically the entire stretch of the White Sea coast is covered by the marshy coastal White Sea lowland. The northern coastal areas are distinguished by their rocky uplands. Present-day tourists are attracted, like magnets, by the austere beauty of the area and the pristine environment. Due to the abundance of commercial fish species like salmon, herring, navaga and flounder, the Pomorie (coastal area) was actively settled by Russian pioneers.

As time went by, a distinctive ethnographic group developed that came to be known as “pomors” with their singular cultural traditions primarily related to fishing. Nowadays, we see the resurgence of those traditions. Getting familiar with these traditions through the local folk shows and stories told by local history buffs comes

as an added bonus for tourists traveling in Northern Karelia.

Ever since the Soviet era, Northern Karelia was a huge draw for thousands upon thousands of travelers seeking whitewater rafting adventures by inflatable boats and kayaks. Nowadays, the properties of the local rivers (lowland rivers, but with a fast current and rapids) attract lots of rafters; moreover, the Karelian tour operators offer escorted tours by experienced rafting guides, along with the rental of quality gear.

The rivers in the following areas are particularly popular: Onda River in the Segezha District, Shuya in the Belomorsk District, Pista and Keret in the Louhi District, Chirko-Kem, Kem, Kuzema and Vonga Rivers in the Kem District, Okhta River in the Kalevala District, and Lenderka River in the Shuyezsky District. The Oktyabrskaya Railway to Murmansk and the “Kola” M18 Federal Highway stretch along the entire White Sea coast.

The stretch of the “Kola” Federal Highway westward throughout the entire area of Karelia by the White Sea

toward the border crossings with Finland is well-maintained (Kortiesalmi and Vartius). In the future, there are plans to upgrade these roads to further develop the border area and inbound tourism into Russia.

“The Karelian White Sea Area” tourist and recreation cluster is scheduled to be inaugurated in the first half of 2020 along the northern coast of the White Sea. Here three tour itineraries will be designed with a developed infrastructure: the “White Sea Petroglyphs,” “Kem Province” and the “Czar’s Road.”

10 White Sea Coastal Area of Karelia

Description of the itinerary:

Segezha › Kostomuksha › Voknavolok › Voynitsa › Kumi Waterfall › Kalevala › Yushkozero › “Paanayarvi” National Park

Map: the Cover



Duration: 700 km with a possible visit to Lake Yushkozero (240 km round-trip) and 5 to 7 days including possible recreation on the lakes en route.

Practical travel tips:

- The itinerary can be reduced, for example, by returning from Kalevala to the White Sea coast by the 86K-3 Highway, and then to Kem (170 km).
- We recommend traveling either by car or bike or as part of an organized tour. All the district capitals operate regular bus routes including to Petrozavodsk.
- Advance hotel reservations are highly recommended when traveling during the high season of summertime or New Year's school break.
- During summer travel, we recommend bringing along swim gear as you will have plenty of swimming opportunities en route.
- Photography and video recording of the facilities of the White Sea-Baltic Canal are prohibited!
- The areas of Northern Karelia are sparsely populated; thus, there are virtually no gas stations along the highways between the infrequent major towns and mobile phone communication is poor.

Segezha District

The most important industrial center of Karelia, the Segezha District, is the site of the Segezha Pulp and Paper Mill (one of the largest in Russia), the Nadvoitsky Aluminum Smelting Plant (be-

longing to the Rusal company), and the Segezha Sawmill and Woodworking Plant (a corporation of the AFK "Systema"). The district boasts the beautiful **Lake Vygozero** with its many islands, one of the largest lakes in Europe and the largest in Karelia after Lake Onego and Lake Ladoga. The lake was later turned into a reservoir after the construction of the White Sea-Baltic Canal. The distance between Medvezhyegorsk and **Segezha** **11**, the district capital of 26,000 residents, is 110 km down the P21 "Kola" Highway.

"The White Sea-Baltic Canal" Historic and Cultural Complex

The large-scale infrastructure of the canal (part of its northern slope) on the territory of the district has been turned into a **historic and cultural complex**. In part, it includes **Floodgate** Nos. 10 and 11, the unique wooden **Shavanskaya spillway dam** (which is in effect a huge artificial waterfall 100 m wide and 12 m high by Floodgate #11), administrative, residential and manufacturing buildings, memorial markers, and the burial sites of Red Army soldiers.

North of Floodgate #10 and Nadvoitsy Township there is a picturesque, strong (though not very high) waterfall known as "**Voitsky Padun**" (4 m high). Tourists are also shown the former estuary of the **Nizhny Vyg River**, which was redirected to ensure the discharge from the cascade of the Vygskaya Hydropower Plant – a fantastic landscape with low-rise rocky ridges surrounded by forest and polished by river waters in the course of several millennia.



Shavanskaya spillway dam

At the end of the 17th century, Old Believers fleeing from persecution started settling on the remote shores of Lake Vygozero. The 18th century saw the construction here of the “Czar’s Road,” which linked the White Sea and Lake Onego. In the second half of the 18th century the Voitsky mine, close to present-day Nadvoitsy Township, extracted copper and gold. You can learn more about the history of this area by visiting the **Museum Center** (Mo–Fr from 10 am to 5 pm; 16B Segezha Str.; <http://museumsegezha.ru>).

Transportation

Train station

Trains to Murmansk from St. Petersburg and Moscow.

- <http://pass.rzd.ru>

Bus Terminal

Routes around the district and round-trips to/from Petrozavodsk (a four-hour ride).

- 22 Spiridonova Str. in Segezha
☎ (814 31) 4 27 80
www.avtovokzaly.ru

Lodging and Food Service

“Segezha” Hotel

The best hotel in town in a green

neighborhood in the city’s outskirts. It has two cafe-bars.

- 4 Lesokulturnaya Str. in Segezha
<http://hotelsegezha.ru>

“Sever” (“North”) Hotel

The best hotel in the township, next to the train station. Good place to spend the night en route to your destination; it has a cafe.

- 4 Mira Str. in Nadvoitsy Township
☎ (814 31) 5 89 30

Kostomuksha 2

Kostomuksha is a cozy, green modern city of some 30,000 on the eastern shore of the picturesque Lake Kontokki close to the Finnish border and the busy auto and railway Lytta-Variuss border crossing, located 240 km from Segezha. The area around Kostomuksha was incorporated as a special urban okrug (county) in the southwest of the Kaleva District.

Kostomuksha is considered a single-industry city. The “Karelian Okatysh (Pellet)” Iron Ore Mining and Dressing Complex (belonging to PAO “Severstal”), located 13 km away from the city boundary, constitutes the core of the local economy. It is also one of

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