

## Legends from the thousand lakes

We are located in North Karelia, the north-eastern part of Finland's Lakeland, right in the border between Finland and Russia.



### Distances:

- Helsinki 561 km
- Kuopio 170 km
- Nordkapp 1159 km
- Rovaniemi 388 km
- St. Petersburg 519 km
- Moscow 1221 km
- Oulu 332 km
- Joensuu 130 km

North Karelia is a mythical land of pristine forests and thousand lakes. Kalevala, the Finnish national epic, is a collection of Karelian folk poetry.

For Karelians the natural environment has always been much more than merely a source of livelihood. In the ancient religions, nature was sacred thing and the forces of the forests and waters were tangible things with which man had to live in harmony.

Nowadays, our municipality of Lieksa, is scarcely populated (about 12.000 inhabitants), and dominated by an unspoiled nature. Big extensions of boreal forests, lakes, rivers, swamps, hills, islands, and a rich wildlife attract nature lovers from all over the world. The word Lieksa itself means swamp valley in old Sami language.

The lifestyle of the local inhabitants is attached to the nature and its rhythm. People in their free time would fish, collect mushrooms or berries from the forest, relax in sauna and swim in the lakes, go ice fishing and skiing during the winter... The forest is always present as an important economic source.

## **Nature**

The diversity of landscapes, flora and fauna in Karelia is enormous. In addition to extensive wilderness areas hikers are offered numerous sign posted trails with marked areas for campfires and backwoods camping. By keeping to marked trails visitors can see the countryside easily and at the same time minimise erosion.

The universal right of access enjoyed in Finland means freedom of movement in the countryside, including the right to pick wild berries and mushrooms. Some forms of fishing are also included, but in many cases require a licence, as does hunting.

A safe way to see the large carnivores of the taiga forest is to spend a night in an animal watching lodge in the middle of wilderness. For example brown bears, wolverines, golden eagles and even wolves and lynxes can be seen.

**Welcome!**