

# Tampere & Häme Region



The Häme (Swedish: Tavastland) region really is a place where modern and traditional Finland meet. A journey from the medieval fortress town of Hämeenlinna to corporation-driven Lahti via the 19th-century industrial boomtown of Tampere is a trip down the Finnish centuries. Here, ancient wooden churches still stand by waterlily lakes, and steamboats take their time travelling between towns while, nearby, researchers discuss superconductivity, and Finland's finest ski-jumpers analyse the air-resistance of the latest lycra bodysuits.

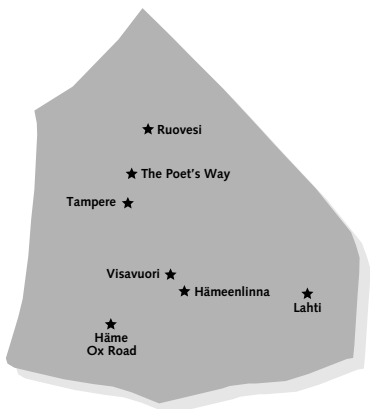
In a similar pattern to other European cities, Tampere has shaken off its post-industrial hangover and become a great destination, with unusual museums, cafés and a cracker of a brewery pub. The city's important workers' movement helped bring better conditions and was bolstered Lenin himself, who spent much time in Tampere before the Russian Revolution.

The region was the scene of much of the earliest Swedish settlement in Finland's interior. In 1249 Earl Birger, on a Catholic crusade, arrived in Häme and founded the Swedish Tavastehus (Finnish: Hämeenlinna). The Swedish settlers who followed established large estates – causing irritation among locals who had traditionally been hunters and fishers.

One of the best things to do on holiday in Finland is to take a cruise on a boat; there's something about the pace of one that compels relaxation. The Poet's Way from Tampere to Virrat is a particularly fine route, and calls in at the beautiful village of Ruovesi, a tempting spot to stop for a couple of days and turn off your mobile phone.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Drinking your way down the beer list at **Panimoravintola Plevna** (p176), Tampere's memorable brewery pub
- Cruising the **Poet's Way** (p174) from Tampere to Virrat, a memorable feast of lakescapes
- Hanging out in peaceful **Ruovesi** (p180), enjoying walks in the forest and a spot of fishing
- Touring the imposing medieval **Häme Castle** (p182), pride of Hämeenlinna
- Cycling the **Häme Ox Road** (p187), an ancient trade route which once linked Turku with Hämeenlinna
- Admiring the work of Finland's greatest sculptor at peaceful **Visavuori** (p186)
- Watching ski jumpers defy gravity at Lahti's awesome **observation terrace** (p188)



## Activities

In summer people tend to head for the water, and one of the best ways of experiencing the Finnish waterways is to take a cruise from Tampere or Lahti; there are several choices, some going long distances, such as the Poet's Way, a romantic journey north from Tampere.

On dry land, the little-known Häme Ox Rd, an old trade route that runs between Hämeenlinna and the coast at Turku is particularly good for exploring by bicycle.

Once the snow comes, there's also heaps to do in the region. Lahti is a prominent winter-sports centre, and while you won't be allowed to use the ski-jump, there are plenty of cross-country tracks and other options.

Fishing is popular all year round. Plenty of people fish in the rapids in the centre of Tampere, but for a more rural experience, one of the best bases in the region is Ruovesi, whose lakes teem with fish. Ice-fishing is also a fun thing to do here in winter.

## Self-Catering Accommodation

For apartment, cabin and cottage rental in the region, get in touch with the Häme Tourist Service (☎ 03-621 2388; www.hameenmatkailu.fi; Linnankatu 6; ☎ 8am-4pm Mon-Fri).

# TAMPERE

☎ 03 / pop 202,932

Effectively Finland's second city, Tampere (Swedish: Tammerfors) is an exciting place combining Finnish sophistication with an industrious energy that is perhaps an inheritance from its days as 'the Manchester of Finland', as 19th-century cotton mills once busily churned alongside the energetic Tammerkoski (the rapids right in the middle of town). Set between two huge lakes that seem almost sea-like at times, Tampere is a great destination with good restaurants and bars and a few unusual museums.

With a large student population and a growing technology industry, Tampere is a dynamic, fast-developing place, although on a grey day the silhouettes of its brick chimneys through the misty haze can evoke a more Dickensian feel. The Finlayson mill complex, though, is the very symbol of regeneration; it is now a collection of bars, museums, shops and cinemas.

## HISTORY

In the Middle Ages, the area around Tampere was inhabited by the Pirkka tribe, a devil-may-care guild of hunters and trappers which collected taxes as far north as Lapland. At that time, the 'town' consisted of a number of Swedish-run estates around the forests and the two lakes that surround Tampere. Modern Tampere was founded in 1779 during Gustav III of Sweden's reign.

In the 19th century, the Tampere Rapids, or Tammerkoski, which today supply abundant hydroelectric power, were a magnet for textile industries. Finnish and foreign investors flocked to the busy town, including the Scottish industrialist James Finlayson, who founded the cotton mill in 1820.

The Russian Revolution in 1917 increased interest in socialism among Tampere's large working-class population. It became the capital of the 'Reds' during the Civil War that followed Finnish independence.

## ORIENTATION

Tampere is set between Näsijärvi and Pyhäjärvi, which are connected by the Tammerkoski. Just about everything is conveniently arranged along one street, Hämeenkatu, with the train station at its eastern end.

## INFORMATION

### Bookshops

**Akateeminen Kirjakauppa** (☎ 248 0300; Hämeenkatu 6; ☎ 9am-9pm Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm Sat, noon-6pm Sun) Extensive selection of English-language books.

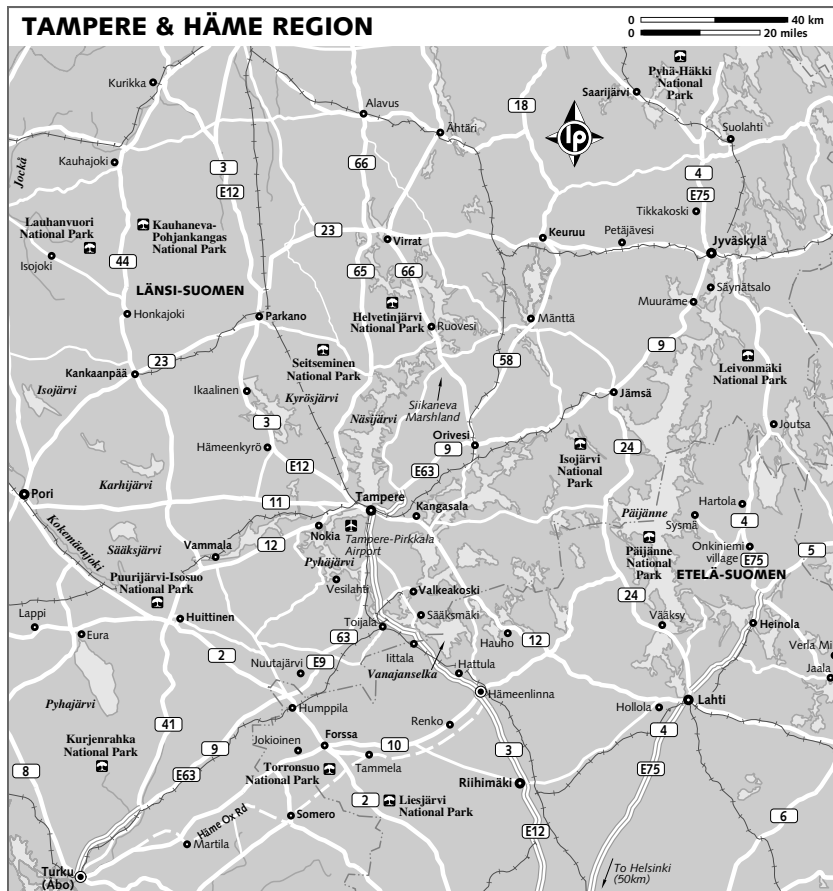
### Emergency

Phone ☎ 112 in any emergency. To report a crime, phone ☎ 219 5111, or visit the police station at Sorinkatu 12.

### Internet Access

In addition to the places listed below, there are three free terminals in the tourist office. **Internet Café Madi** (☎ 214 8513; Tuomiokirkonkatu 36; per hr €3; ☎ 10am-10pm Mon-Fri, 11am-10pm Sat) Not far from the train station.

**Tampere City library** (Metso; ☎ 314 614; Pirkankatu 2; ☎ 9.30am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-3pm Sat, 9.30am-7pm weekdays in summer) The library is called 'Metso' (capercaillie) by locals because of its unusual architecture. It has several Internet terminals, some of which are first-come-first-served (15 minute time limit).



**Vuoltsu Internet Café** (☎ 3146 6899; Vuolteenkatu 13; per hr €3; ☎ noon-6pm Mon-Fri Jun-Aug, 1-8pm Mon-Fri Sep-May) Opposite the bus station.

### Laundry

**Pese Itse** (☎ 222 8755; Hämeenpuisto 12B) A self-service coin-operated launderette.

### Left Luggage

The train station has lockers for €2 to €3, depending on size. It also has a left-luggage counter. Lockers at the bus station cost €2 for 24 hours.

### Medical Services

You can dial ☎ 10023 between 7am and 10pm to get an on-call doctor.

**Tampere University Hospital** (☎ 247 5111) This hospital, about 2km east of the train station, deals with emergencies.

### Money

**Forex** (☎ 020-751 2640; Hämeenkatu 14B; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9am-3pm Sat) Moneychangers on the main square.

### Post

**Main post office** (☎ 0200 7100; Rautatiekatu 21, 33100 Tampere; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat) Near the train station.

### Tourist Information

**Tampere city tourist office** (☎ 3146 6800; www.tampere.fi; Verkatehtaankatu 2; ☎ 9am-4pm Mon-Fri Oct-May, 9am-8pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun Jun-Aug, 9am-5pm

Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun Sep; ☎ ) Lots of information and helpful staff. Pick up the free guide to the town. In summer, yellow-shirted cyclists act as mobile information points; just flag them down!

### Travel Agencies

**Kilroy Travels** (☎ 020-354 5769; Tuomiokirkonkatu 34A; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri) Deals in all travel including student/discount fares.

### SIGHTS

#### Finlayson Centre

Tampere's era as an industrial city began with the arrival of Scot James Finlayson, who established a small workshop by the Tammerkoski here in 1820. He later erected a huge cotton mill; the massive red-brick building was the first in the Nordic countries to have electric lighting, which came on in 1882. It has now been sensitively converted into a glitzy mall of cafés and shops; you'll also find a cinema here, as well as a great brewery pub and a couple of intriguing museums.

#### VAKOILUMUSEO

This popular but off-beat **spy museum** (☎ 212 3007; www.vakoilumuseo.fi; Satakunnankatu 18; adult/child €7/5; ☎ noon-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun, from 10am daily May-Aug) under the Finlayson centre plays to the budding secret agent in all of us, with a large and well-assembled display of the devices of international espionage, mainly from the Cold War era. As well as histories of famous Finnish and foreign spies, it has numerous Bond-style gadgets and some interactive displays – write your name in invisible ink, tap a telephone call, intercept an email, or measure the microwave emissions of your mobile. There are folders with English translations, but they are slightly unsatisfying. When it's busy, there are more activities for kids, who can take a suitability test for KGB cadet school.

#### WERSTAS

The **Central Museum of Labour** (☎ 253 8800; www.tkm.fi; Väinö Linnan aukio 8; admission €4; ☎ 11am-6pm Tue-Sun) is dedicated to the history of working and of the workers' movement. You will find changing exhibitions covering social history and labour industries. There's a particularly good coverage of the steam engine, with the highlight one of the enormous wheels that powered up the Finlayson factory.

### Other Museums

#### VAPRIIKKI MUSEUM CENTRE

Tampere's premier exhibition space is **Vapriikki** (☎ 3146 6966; Veturiakio 4; www.tampere.fi/vapriikki; adult/child from €5/1 depending on exhibitions; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue & Thu-Sun, 11am-8pm Wed), a bright, modern glass and steel gallery in the renovated Tampella textile mill. As well as regularly changing art and photography exhibitions, there's a permanent display on Tampere's history from prehistoric times to the present. Also here is the small but cluttered **ice hockey museum**, with memorabilia of the players and teams that star in Finland's national sporting passion.

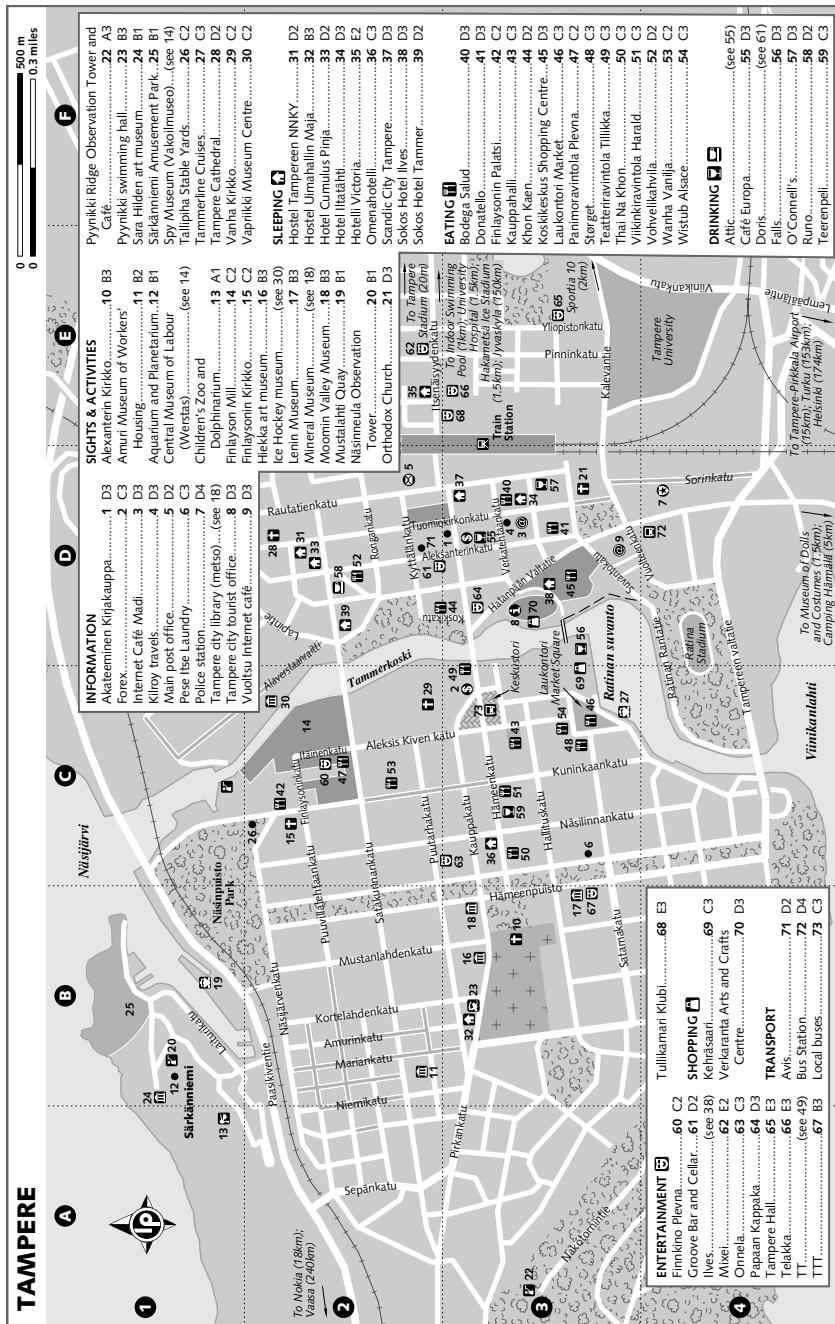
There's also a museum of shoes – Tampere was known for its footwear industry – and a pleasant café in the complex.

#### LENIN MUSEUM

Admirers of bearded revolutionaries won't want to miss the small **Lenin Museum** (☎ 276 8100; www.lenin.fi; Hämeenpuisto 28; admission €4; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 11am-4pm Sat & Sun), housed in the Workers' Hall where Lenin and Stalin first met at a conference in 1905 (see p29 for more on Lenin's time in Finland). In two rooms, the museum documents his life by way of photos and documents; it's a little dry but it's fascinating to see, for example, Vladimir's old school report (a straight-A student) or a threadbare couch that the man slept on. One note, penned shortly before his death in 1924, recommends that Comrade Stalin be ousted from his position as General Secretary; this unfortunately wasn't acted on. Remarkably, this claims to be the only permanent museum in the world devoted to one of the 20th century's most influential figures. There's a crazy gift shop where you can buy Lenin pens, badges, T-shirts and other souvenirs of the Soviet era.

#### MOOMIN VALLEY MUSEUM

Tove Jansson, the Finnish artist and writer, created her Moomin figures decades ago, but their popularity never seems to wane – at least not in Finland or Japan. The **museum** (Muumilaakso; ☎ 020-716 6578; Hämeenpuisto 20; adult/child €4/1; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat & Sun, closed Mon Sep-May), in the basement of the public library building, contains original drawings, plus elaborate tableaux models depicting stories from Moomin Valley (English-language explanations available), computer



<b>INFORMATION</b>	1 D3 Akateeminen Kijakauppa	10 B3 Pyynikki Observation Tower and Café
	2 C3 Forex	11 B1 Sara Hildén art museum
	3 D3 Amuri Museum of Workers' Housing	12 B1 Särkänniemi Amusement Park
	4 D3 Kiteley travel	13 A1 Spy Museum (Valkoimuseo)
	5 D2 Aquarium and Planetarium	14 C2 Talliipa Stables
	6 C2 Main post office	15 C2 Tammerine Cruises
	7 D4 Police station	16 B3 Tampere Cathedral
	8 D3 Tampere city library (metsä)	17 C2 Vanha Kirkko
	9 D3 Tampere city tourist office	18 B3 Vapriikki Museum Centre
	10 B3 Vuodustu internet café	
	11 B1 Children's Zoo and Dolphinarium	
	12 B1 Children's Zoo and Dolphinarium	
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displays, toys and other memorabilia. Naturally, there's a gift shop.

Adjacent is the small **Mineral Museum** (Kivimuseo; ☎ 3146 6046; adult/child €4/1), devoted to rare stones and fossils. There's a huge array of delicate, spectacular crystal formations and vivid colours, as well as fossils that include dinosaur eggs, but, needless to say, although it has the same hours as Moomin Valley, it doesn't have the same crowds.

**HIEKKA ART MUSEUM**

The collection of Kustaa Hiekkä, a wealthy industrialist, is contained in the **Hiekkä museum** (☎ 212 3973; Pirkankatu 6; admission €5; ☹ 3-6pm Tue-Thu, noon-3pm Sun). There are paintings, furniture and fine old gold and silver items in the impressive building.

**AMURIN TYÖLÄISMUSEOKORTTELI**

An entire block of 19th-century wooden houses, including 32 apartments, a bakery, a shoemaker, two general shops and a café is preserved in the **Amuri Museum of Workers' Housing** (☎ 3146 6690; Satakunnankatu 49; adult/child €4/1; ☹ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun May-mid-Sep). It's one of the most realistic home museums in Finland - many homes look as if the tenant had left just moments ago to go shopping.

**MUSEUM OF DOLLS & COSTUMES**

This fascinating **museum** (☎ 222 6261; Hatanpään puistokuja 1; adult/child €4/1; ☹ 11am-5pm Tue-Sun mid-Apr-early Dec) at Hatanpää Manor, south of the city, has more than 4000 dolls on display. The oldest and rarest date from the 12th century. There are also temporary exhibitions on various doll-related themes.

Hatanpää Manor house is surrounded by the large **Arboretum Park** with about 350 species of flora. Buses 3, 7 and 21 run from the city centre to Hatanpää.

**Särkänniemi**

On the northern edge of town, this promontory **amusement park** (☎ 248 8111; www.sarkanniemi.fi; adult/child day pass up to €29/18; ☹ rides noon-7pm mid-May-Aug) is a large complex with several attractions, including a good art gallery and an aquarium. There's a bewildering system of entry tickets and opening times depending on what your interest is. A day pass is valid for all sights and unlimited rides, while €5 will get you up the observation tower, and into the gallery and farm zoo, on days that

the rides are open. To get to Särkänniemi, take bus 4 from the train station.

Inside the amusement park are 30 **car-nival rides** including the 'Tornado super rollercoaster', plus cafés and restaurants. The **aquarium** (☹ as per amusement park, plus 10am-4pm in winter) has limited information in English and isn't especially memorable, with the Finnish fish (including some rare sturgeon relatives) more interesting than the colourful hobby-tank favourites. The **planetarium**, with daily shows, is in the same complex, above which soars the 168m high **Näsinneula Observation Tower** (☹ 11am-11.30pm). This is the tallest such tower in these Northern lands and it alone is worth the visit, with spectacular views of the city and surrounding lakes. There's a revolving restaurant near the top.

Opposite, the **Dolphinarium** has Finland's only dolphin show. There are one to five dolphin shows in summer and an entertaining dolphin training show (in Finnish) daily at other times. Nearby is the **children's zoo**, with gentle domestic animals.

On a different note, the complex also contains the **Sara Hildén art museum** (☎ 3144 3500; ☹ 11am-6pm, closed Mon Sep-Apr), which has a collection of international and Finnish modern art and sculpture amassed by Sara Hildén, a local businessperson and art collector. The space is normally devoted to excellent exhibitions showcasing particular artists. There are good views from the café, which has Alvar Aalto furniture.

**Churches**

The wonderful **Tampere Cathedral** (Tuomiokirkonkatu; ☹ 10am-6pm) is one of the most notable examples of National Romantic architecture in Finland. It was designed by Lars Sonck and was finished in 1907. The famous artist Hugo Simberg was responsible for the frescoes and stained glass; once you've seen them you'll appreciate that they were controversial at the time. A procession of ghostly child-like apostles holds the 'garland of life', the garden of death shows graves tended by skeletal figures, while another image shows a wounded angel being stretched off by two children. In the dome is a winged serpent with the Apple of Knowledge in its mouth. The altarpiece is by Magnus Enckell, and shows a dreamlike Resurrection in similar style. The symbolist stonework adds to the haunting feel.



The small but ornate, onion-domed **Orthodox church** (☎ 10am-4pm Mon-Sat, noon-4pm Sun Jun-Aug), near the train station, is also worth a visit. During the Civil War, White troops (loyal to the government) besieged the church, which had been taken over by the Reds (Russian-backed troops).

The landmark **Vanha Kirkko** (☎ Jun-Aug) just north of Keskustori Square is a lovely old wooden building and has occasional gospel concerts on Saturday evenings.

Other notable churches include the **Alexanterin Kirkko** (Pirkankatu; ☎ 10am-6pm), beautiful with its red brick and green spires and named for the Tsar Alexander II, and the **Finlaysonin Kirkko** (Puuvillelahteankatu 2; ☎ 10am-6pm Jun-Aug), built for employees of the cotton mill and their families.

## Other Sights

### PYYNIKKI RIDGE

Rising between Tampere's two lakes, this ridge is a forested area of walking and cycling trails with fine views on both sides. It rises 85m above the shores of the lake; this is an Everest by Finnish standards and claims to be the highest gravel ridge in the world. There's a stone **observation tower** (☎ 9am-8pm; adult/child €1/0.50) on the ridge, which also has a great café serving Tampere's best doughnuts. You can easily walk or drive to the tower, or take westbound bus 15 to its terminus and walk back from there along the ridge.

### TALLIPIHA STABLE YARDS

In the attractive Näsinpuisto park, **Tallipiha** (☎ 040-507 499; Kuninkaankatu 4; admission free; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Sat, 11am-5pm Sun Jun-mid-Aug, shorter hrs in winter) is a restored collection of 19th-century stable yards and staff cottages that now house artists and craftworkers making handicrafts, chocolates, ceramics and shoes. Traditional Midsummer and Christmas celebrations are held here and you can ride in a horse-drawn carriage or eat at the Russian-style **Café Vatruska**.

## ACTIVITIES

There's an **indoor swimming pool** (☎ 215 5812; Joukahaisenkatu 7; admission €4.50; ☎ 6am-7.45pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4.45pm Sat & Sun, closed Tue morning) about 1.5km east of the train station.

The **Pyyntikki swimming hall** (☎ 3146 6863; Kotelahdenkatu 26; admission €4.50; ☎ closed Wed, Thu, Sun & summer) is next to Hostel Uimahallin Maja.

To **fish** in the Tammerkoski in the town centre, you will need a daily (€4.50) or weekly (€16) permit, available from the tourist office. The tourist office also have a list of operators who run guided fishing tours in the lakes and rivers hereabouts.

You can rent **rowing boats** and **canoes** from Camping Härmälä (see Sleeping). Bikes can be had at **Sportia 10** (☎ 225 0000; Sammonkatu 60), and roller blades, skis, and kayaks from **Moto-Rent** (☎ 379 2778; www.kangasalanmotorent.fi; Lentolantie 21, Kangasala). Moto-Rent is based in Kangasala, 10km southwest of Tampere, but will deliver stuff to town

## TOURS

You can get an overview of Tampere's attractions on a **bus tour** (tickets €12; ☎ 2pm Jun-Aug). The guided tours depart from the tourist office and cover the main sights, the Tammerkoski industrial area and Pyyntikki Ridge. They take about two hours and have commentary in Finnish and English.

## CRUISES

Lake cruises on Tampere's two magnificent lakes are extremely popular in summer and there are plenty of options. Trips on Näsijärvi leave from Mustalahti quay, while Laukontori quay serves Pyhäjärvi.

**Tammerline** (☎ 254 2500; www.tammerline.fi) offers short cruises on Pyhäjärvi from mid-June to mid-August, with departures from the Laukontori quay on Monday and Wednesday (adult/child €10/2). On Monday and Saturday the cruise goes further to Nokia (adult/child €15/4).

Tammerlines Cruises also has a shuttle service to nearby **Viikinsaari**, a pleasant picnic spot with a good restaurant, from Tuesday to Sunday in summer (late May to late August). Departures from Laukontori quay are every hour on the hour (adult/child return €6/2).

The **SS Tarjanne** (☎ 212 4804; www.finnishsilverline.com; ☎ 10.45am Tue, Thu & Sat Jun-late Aug), a steam ship, departs from Mustalahti quay. The route, from Tampere to Ruovesi and Virrat, is known as the **Poet's Way** and is one of the finest lake cruises in Finland. A one-way ticket costs €33 to Ruovesi and €44 to Virrat. For €23 per person, you can sleep in this old boat before or after your trip, and get free day-use of the cabin (which is otherwise €21). Bicycles can be taken on board

for a small fee. You can book a day-trip to Virrat or Ruovesi, with one of the legs made by bus (return to Virrat €50).

For information about cruises with Finnish Silverline between Tampere and Hämeenlinna see p179.

## FESTIVALS & EVENTS

There are festivals and annual events in Tampere almost year-round. Usually held in early March, the **Tampere Film Festival** (www.tamperefilmfestival.fi) is a respected international festival of short films. The **Tampere Biennale** (www.tampere.fi) is a festival of new Finnish music, held in April of even-numbered years only. The **Pispala Schottische** (www.sottiisi.net), an international folk-dance festival, takes place in early June. **Tammerfest** (www.tammerfest.net) is the city's premier music festival, held over five days in mid-July and featuring rock concerts at the Ratina Stadium and smaller gigs around town. The **Tampere International Theatre Festival** (www.teatterikesa.fi), held in early August, is a showcase of international and Finnish theatre. There's also a fringe festival called **Off-Tampere** (www.teatterikesa.fi) held at the same time. October or early November brings the **Tampere Jazz Happening** (www.tampere.fi), an award-winning event featuring Finnish and international jazz musicians. Twice a year in autumn and mid-winter, the **Tampere Illuminations** (www.tampere.fi) light up the city streets with 40,000 coloured lights.

## SLEEPING Budget

**Hostel Uimahallin Maja** (☎ 222 9460; www.hosteltampere.com; Pirkankatu 10-12; dm €20-23, s/d €38.50/54; ☎) Tampere's main hostel is an HI-affiliated place with large light rooms at the western end of town. The dorms are a little crowded but it's all comfy beds (no bunks) and the lino floors evoke a '70s feel. There's a basic kitchen - you have to fetch water from the bathroom - but an on-site café, sociable feel and friendly staff make it a good choice.

**Hostel Tampereen NKKY** (☎ 254 4020; fax 254 4044; Tuomiokirkonkatu 12A; dm €13.50-15, s/d €31/44; ☎ Jun-late Aug; ☎ ☎) Right opposite the cathedral, this HI-affiliated summer-only place is run by the Finnish YWCA. The rooms are spacious and have beds, desks, and large windows. There's a tiny kitchen, laundry sink and drying room, and good showers (the rooms near them are noisier).

Reception is open from 8am to 10am and 4pm to 11pm.

**Camping Härmälä** (☎ 265 1355, 6138 3210; Leirintäkatu 8; tent sites €9-11 plus per person €4, 3-5-person cabins €29-66) About 5km south of the centre (take bus 1) is this spacious camping ground on the shores of the Pyhäjärvi lake. There's a café/restaurant, saunas and rowing boats, as well as an adjacent summer hotel with self-contained rooms (single/double €36/50); open June to August.

## Midrange

**Hotelli Victoria** (☎ 242 5111; www.hotellivictoria.fi; Itsenäisyydenkatu 1; s/d €99/134, weekends & summer €79/84; ☎ ☎ ☎) This warm family-run hotel is handy for the station and offers considerable style, colour and comfort as well as business-standard facilities. The recently renovated rooms are light and quiet despite the busy road and there's a good sauna. It's closed most of December.

**Hotelli Iltatähti** (☎ 315 161; www.hotelliiltatahti.fi; Tuomiokirkonkatu 19; s/d €40/50, with bathroom €53/60; ☎ reception 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, noon-6pm Sat & Sun; ☎) Close to the train station, this is a friendly guesthouse with a large network of rooms. Guests have use of a kitchen, and the rooms are good value. The same owners run a bed and breakfast 4km from town, which has its own pool and countryside feel.

**Omenahotelli** (www.omenahotelli.fi; Hämeenkatu 28; r €55; ☎) This offering from the good-value Internet-booking chain couldn't be much more central. As usual, rooms have to be booked in advance (although there is a terminal in the lobby to do it), as there is no reception staff. There are twin beds and a fold-out sofa in every modern room.

**Hotel Cumulus Pinja** (☎ 241 5111; www.cumulus.fi; Satakunnankatu 10; s/d €115/135, weekends & summer €94; ☎ ☎ ☎) This friendly, relatively small Art Nouveau building near the cathedral has a quiet but central location. Its charm is that it feels more intimate than most Finnish chain hotels; the rooms are somewhat small however, and lack a little light. Service is good and an evening sauna is included.

**Scandic City Tampere** (☎ 244 6111; www.scandic-hotels.com; Hämeenkatu 1; s/d €125/149, in summer €86/96; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) Opposite the train station, this hotel has just undergone a substantial renovation. It has plenty of facilities, including sauna, gym, restaurants and a cocktail bar.

The rooms are good; the superior class costs about €15 more but has wireless Internet access and a couple of other extras.

**Sokos Hotel Tammer** (☎ 020-1234 632; www.sokoshotels.fi; Satakunnankatu 13; s/d €116/145, weekends & summer s €81-91, d €91-97, ste €250; (P) (X) (Q)) Constructed in 1929 as the city's Grand Hotel, this magnificent building has plush public areas, with an old-fashioned elegance. The rooms are large, many with fine views over town, and have the expected facilities but feel a little tired and could do with a coat of varnish and new carpet. Parking is very limited. Good breakfast buffet and sauna included.

## Top End

**Sokos Hotel Ilves** (☎ 020-1234 631; www.sokoshotels.fi; Hatanpäänvaltie 1; s/d €132/162; summer & weekend r €105; ste €275-530; (P) (X) (Q) (S)) This large tower hotel is Tampere's premier business hotel and popular with visitors for the excellent views from its rooms, most of which overlook the Tammerkoski just next to the tourist office. There are several restaurants, a popular nightclub and business centre. As well as the saunas, there's an enticing Jacuzzi. Superior rooms, which cost €18 extra, have marginally better facilities, including wireless Internet access.

## EATING

Tampere's speciality, *mustamakkara*, is a mild sausage made with cow's blood, black-pudding style. It's normally eaten with lingonberry jam and is much tastier than it might sound. You can get it at several markets, including the kauppahalli.

## Restaurants

### FINNISH

**Panimoravintola Plevna** (☎ 260 1200; Itäininkatu 8; mains €10-23; ☎ food served 11am-10pm) Inside the old Finlayson textile mill is a huge brewery pub and restaurant that is the most enjoyable place to dine in Tampere. As well as Finnish-style fish and steak dishes, the speciality here is German sausages such as bratwurst and bockwurst (from €8) which can be combined in the famous sausage platter (€15.30) served in a pan with potatoes. Wash down a plate of this hearty fare with a pint of one of Plevna's nine delicious beers; the strong stout is especially good.

**Finlaysonin Palatsi** (☎ 260 5770; Kuninkaankatu 1; mains €17-23; ☎ 11am-midnight Tue-Fri, noon-midnight

Sat) This grand turn-of-the-20th-century residence behind the Finlayson centre has gardens and grounds and houses a classy restaurant with a relaxing terrace. The food is ambitious and delivers, with a short, quality selection of dishes such as reindeer carpaccio or lamb kidneys and tongue in port sauce.

**Teatteriravintola Tillikka** (☎ 254 4700; Teatteri-italo; lunch from €7, mains €12-24; ☎ lunch & dinner) This place, wedged between the river and the TT (Tampere Theatre), serves a fine buffet-style lunch. In the evenings it steps up a gear, serving a creatively prepared range of steaks and fish and also happily catering to children. The theatre also has a good café, Kivi, with a terrace overlooking the central square.

**Viikinkiravintola Harald** (☎ 213 8380; Hämeenkatu 23; mains €16-22; ☎ lunch & dinner) This is a Viking-theme restaurant, which isn't really Finnish, though much of the food is, with game specialities such as reindeer. It's a lot of fun, and identical to the one in Turku, with plenty of pageantry; some meals are served on Viking shields. There's a variety of set menus starting at €24.

### INTERNATIONAL

**Wistub Alsace** (☎ 212 0260; Laukontori 6B; mains €15-21; ☎ 5pm-midnight Tue-Fri, noon-midnight Sat). This small, intimate and softly lit place specializes in the cuisine of the Alsace region and does it well, with delicious magret (the breast of corn-fattened birds) of duck and tasty chicken with spätzle noodles perfectly accompanied by deliciously aromatic Alsatian white wines. The desserts are original and delicious.

**Thai Na Khon** (☎ 212 1779; Hämeenkatu 29; lunch buffet €7.10, mains €10-16; ☎ lunch & dinner) This Thai restaurant on the main street is soothingly and tastefully decorated, with plush seats, varnished tables, and a colonial-era feel. The main dishes are pretty abundant and they come with rice, so it's good value. There's plenty of vegetarian choices.

**Khon Kaen** (☎ 212 1776; Koskikatu 3) A sister restaurant to Thai Na Khon, this is on the other side of the bridge. It's smaller but similar in feel.

**Bodega Salud** (☎ 233 4400; Tuomiokirkonkatu 19; mains €14-26; ☎ 11am-11pm Mon-Fri, noon-midnight Sat, 1-10pm Sun) This popular place is a Tampere favourite for its cosy atmosphere and good salad, fruit and cheese bar (included with

main courses). It styles itself as a Spanish restaurant and certainly does a decent paella, but most dishes have a distinctly Finnish feel, with salmon, reindeer and creamy sauces all present and tasty. Adventurous types may go for the alligator or the Rocky Mountain oysters. You get a certificate if you eat the latter – shellfish are scarce in Colorado, but a few rams have been heard bleating in countertenor tones.

**Donatello** (Aleksanterinkatu 37; buffet €6; ☎ buffet 10.30am-5pm, kitchen 10.30am-9pm Mon-Fri, 10.30am-10pm weekends) With a lavish all-you-can-eat pizza and pasta buffet during the day, Donatello is excellent value and the food is much tastier than at the chains that offer similar fare.

## Cafés

**Wanha Vanilja** (☎ 214 7141; Kuninkaankatu 15; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat, also Sun in Jul & Aug). Tampere's best café is a treasure-trove of time-worn furniture and curios, including dozens of clocks showing different times. It has a seriously tempting array of cakes and pastries which are well accompanied by their famed vanilla coffee. There's also a good lunchtime salad bar and a range of quiches.

**Storget** (☎ 222 6210; Laukontori 10; sandwiches €4-8; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Sat) A small bright café at the quay, this specializes in spectacular Danish open sandwiches (Danwiches), as well as burgers and American-style tuna and club sandwiches. It's not cheap but the sandwiches are big.

**Vohvelikahvila** (☎ 214 4225; Ojakatu 2; waffles €3-6; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Sat, 10am-8pm Sun) This is a cosy and quaint little place specializing in Tampere's best fresh waffles, which come laden with cream and chocolate.

## Quick Eats & Self Catering

**Kauppahalli** (Hämeenkatu 19; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 8am-3pm Sat) This intriguing indoor market is one of Finland's best, with picturesque wooden stalls. There are several good cafés, and, at number 50, Teivon Liha, the best place to try cheap *mustamakkara* with berry jam.

**Laukontori market** (☎ 8am-2pm Mon-Sat) This is a produce and fish market at Laukontori, also called *alaranta* (lower lakeside).

**Koskikeskus Shopping Centre** (Hatanpäänvaltie; ☎ 10am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat) Just south of the tourist office, this centre is good for fast food – it has pizza, kebab, taco and hamburger outlets, as well as a supermarket.

## DRINKING

**Café Europa** (☎ 223 5526; Aleksanterinkatu 29; ☎ noon-2 or 3am) This is easily the coolest bar in Tampere. Furnished with 1930s-style horsehair couches and chairs, it is a romantic old-world European type of place complete with Belgian and German beers, board games, ornate mirrors and chandeliers, and an excellent summer terrace. Upstairs is a small dance club called Attic, with DJs playing hip-hop and funk, open from Thursday to Sunday.

**Panimoravintola Plevna** (☎ 260 1200; Itäininkatu 8; ☎ 11am-1am Mon-Thu, 11am-2am Fri & Sat, noon-11pm Sun) This is a superb and spacious brewery pub in the converted Finlayson cotton mill buildings. It brews nine beers, including an award-winning strong stout, two ciders and even distils its own schnapps. Plevna is cheery without being overly boisterous and is mostly teenager-free.

**Runo** (☎ 213 3931; Ojakatu 3; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Sat, 10am-8pm Sun) This elegant but relaxed spot is the perfect place for a bit of light contemplation. The huge windows allow you to keep tabs on the weather, the coffee is good, and there's a selection of books and art to browse. Runo means 'poem' in Finnish.

**O'Connell's** (Rautatiekatu 24; ☎ 4pm-1am) Near the train station, this rambling and attractive Irish pub is an unpretentious place with plenty of comfy seats to sink into with a pint. It's popular with locals, travellers and expats, and has some good beers on tap as well as free Internet access.

**Teerenpeli** (☎ 0424 925 210; Hämeenkatu 25; ☎ noon-2am) Another good pub with home-brewed beer and cider, this has a relaxing, candle-lit interior and heaps of choice at the taps. They do some good fruit-flavoured brews and also have a terrace and a cavernous club downstairs.

**Falls** (Kehäsaari; ☎ noon-3am) This bar in the converted brick factory is set in a good little zone of shops and has a range of beers and ciders to choose from. The main reason to come here is for its fantastic little terrace wedged between the building and the water; a top Tampere spot!

## ENTERTAINMENT

### Nightclubs & Live Music

**Tullikamari klubi** (Tullikamarinaukio 2; ☎ nightly, to 4am Wed-Sat) This cavernous place near the train station is Tampere's main indoor venue for rock concerts. Big-name Finnish bands

sometimes perform here and the cover charge varies from free to €15. This is also one of the venues for the film festival.

**Telakka** (☎ 225 0700; Jullikamarinaukio 3) This is a bohemian bar-theatre-restaurant in another of Tampere's restored red-brick factories. There's live music here regularly, theatre performances, art exhibitions and a brilliant summer terrace with colourful blocky wooden seats.

**Paapan Kapakka** (☎ 211 0037; Koskikatu 9; ☎ noon-late) A small bar in the heart of town (across from the tourist office) with live jazz and blues every day and a swinging terrace.

**Ilves** (Hatanpäänvaltatie 1; ☎ 9pm-4am Wed-Sat) In the Sokos Hotel Ilves, this is one of the town's more popular nightclubs, with fashionable folk aged 25 and over.

**Groove Bar** (☎ 389 9000; Aleksanterinkatu 22; ☎ 4pm-4am Mon-Sat, 10pm-4am Sun) Just off the main drag, this dark and moody bar is a popular spot for a pre-club drink. Handily, there's a club downstairs, the Cellar, that's open from 10pm Wednesday to Saturday.

**Doris** (☎ 11pm-4am Tue-Sun) Next door to the Groove Bar, this plays classic popular rock for dancing until late.

**Mixei** (☎ 222 0364; Itsenäisyydenkatu 7; ☎ to 2am nightly, to 4am weekends) Recently moved to larger premises, Tampere's premier gay venue is a café and restaurant that livens up considerably later on; it hosts regular club nights and themed parties and is a good place to meet people. The name means 'Why Not?'

**Onnela** (Puutarhakatu 21; ☎ Wed-Sun 10pm-4am) This dark building looks like a library from outside but has become one of Tampere's most popular mainstream discos, with a relaxed crowd in their 20s and 30s listening to unchallenging Europop.

### Classical Music, Theatre & Cinema

Tampere is a thriving centre for the performing arts. There are several theatres in the city and a programme of what's on where is available from the tourist office.

Both the theatres listed here present major Finnish and international shows, including musicals, but as is the case elsewhere in the country, almost all performances are in Finnish.

**Tampere Hall** (box office ☎ 243 4500; www.tampere.talo.fi; Yliopistonkatu 55) For classical concerts, this is the city's spectacular modern concert

hall. It hosts classical concerts by the Tampere Philharmonic Orchestra on Friday from September to May. In addition to this it also puts on regular chamber music concerts, and visiting opera and ballet performances.

**TT** (Tampere Theatre; ☎ 216 0500; Keskustori) Just off Hameenkatu near the river, this is one of the two biggest theatres in town.

**TTT** (Tampere Workers' Theatre; ☎ 217 8222; Hameenpuisto 32) This is the other main theatre venue.

**Finnkino Plevna** (☎ 3138 3831; Itäinekatu 4) In the Finlayson centre, this is one of two main cinemas in the city and has late sessions on Friday and Saturday. It's the main venue for the film festival.

### Sport

Tampere has two ice-hockey teams in the national league – Ilves and Tappara – both of which are among the best in the country, and the city is generally regarded as the home of the sport. Finland's first artificial hockey rink was opened here in 1955.

**Hakametsä Ice Stadium** (off Hervannan Valtaväyä fwy) This place, about 2km east of the train station, is the venue for matches on Thursday, Saturday and Sunday from September to March. Take eastbound bus No 25 to get there.

**Tampere United** (☎ 255 4454; www.tampereunited.com) The local football team is also quite successful in the national league. It plays games in summer at Tampere Stadium and sometimes at the Ratina Stadium.

### Shopping

**Verkaranta Arts & Crafts Centre** (Verkatehtaankatu 2; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat) This is a small former factory building, located near the tourist office, which features exhibits and sells extraordinary textiles and handicrafts.

**Kehräsaari** (☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat) Across the footbridge from Verkaranta, just east of Laukontori market square, this converted brick factory building has many boutiques selling authentic Finnish glassware, handicrafts, knitted clothing and T-shirts.

### GETTING THERE & AWAY

#### Air

You can fly to Tampere direct from Stockholm and Copenhagen with **Blue 1** (☎ 06000-25831; www.blue1.com); all other international

flights are via Helsinki. There are several daily Finnair flights to Tampere from Helsinki and other major Finnish cities.

**Ryanair** (www.ryanair.com) also flies to and from Tampere, using a dedicated terminal. There are daily services to London Stansted, Hahn and Riga.

### Boat

You can cruise to and from Hämeenlinna by lake ferry in summer. **Suomen Hopealinja** (Finnish Silverline; ☎ 212 4804; www.finnishsilverline.com) operates cruises from Tampere's Laukontori quay daily (one way €39, 8½ hours), and north to Virrat along the Poet's Way (€44, eight hours).

### Bus

The **main bus station** (Hatanpäänvaltatie 7) is a block from the Koskikeskus shopping centre. Regular express buses run from Helsinki (€28.10, 2½ hours) and Turku (€25.60, three hours) and most other major towns in Finland are served from here.

Local buses are most conveniently taken from Keskustori (central square).

### Train

The train station is in the centre at the eastern end of Hameenkatu. Express trains run hourly to/from Helsinki (€24.90, two hours). Intercity trains continue to Oulu (€52.50, five hours) and there are direct trains to Turku, Pori, Jyväskylä, Vaasa and Joensuu.

### GETTING AROUND

#### To/From the Airport

The Tampere-Pirkkala airport is 15km southwest of the city centre. Each arriving flight is met by a bus to Tampere. Bus 61 to the airport stops at Pyyntikintori and several points in the city centre (€2, 30 to 45 minutes). Another company, Tokee, serves the Ryanair flights, leaving from the railway station just under two hours before take-off (€6).

There are also shared **taxis** (☎ 10041; per person €12) carrying up to eight passengers; these must be booked at least three hours in advance from the city to the airport.

### Bus

The local bus service is extensive and a one-hour ticket costs €1.40. A 24-hour Traveler's Ticket is €6. You can pick up a free bus-route map at the city tourist office.

### Car Hire

There are several car hire companies at the airport and in town. These include **Avis** (☎ 231 4944; www.avis.com; Kytälänkatu) and **Netrent** (www.netrent.fi; Tampere Airport Terminal 2).

### Taxi

There are plenty of cab ranks; otherwise call ☎ 10041. For a wheelchair-friendly cab, call ☎ 10045.

## NORTH OF TAMPERE

### ROUTE 66

☎ 03

Road No 66, starting northeast of Tampere and winding 75km north to Virrat, is one of the oldest roads in Finland. When the famous song, first performed by Nat King Cole, was translated into Finnish, the popular rock star Jussi Raittinen adapted the lyrics to this highway. It's a good drive, through young pine forest and lakescapes. Cycling isn't such a great option, as the road is narrowish, and there are plenty of logging trucks hurtling by. There's plenty of hiking opportunities and the town of Ruovesi, by far the best base, is also a great place to try some fishing.

### Orivesi

Road 66 begins in Orivesi. There's nothing spectacular in the village itself, but it is at a major crossroads. The village's silo-like modern **church** (☎ Mon-Fri +summer) was controversial when built, one reason being the Kain Tapper woodcarving in the altar. The old bell tower remains, with its *vaivaisukko* (pauper statue).

### Kallenautio Roadhouse

This beautiful wooden **roadhouse** (☎ 335 8915; ☎ 11am-6pm Sun-Fri, 11am-4pm Sat Jun-Aug) is the oldest building along Route 66 and dates from 1757. It has always been a roadside guesthouse. Around 200 years ago these were nearly as common as petrol stations are today. However, there are few such places left.

The complex has a beautiful café; you sit at long old wooden tables and imagine winter travellers huddled around the blazing fire. There are sometimes handicraft exhibitions – you can see how *päre* is made



from timber. *Päre* is a thin sheet of wood once burnt to provide light in a house. It was often the cause of fires that destroyed entire towns.

### Siikaneva Marshland

This large protected marshland accommodates some unusual bird species, including owls. It's a great place to walk, with duck-board paths across the peat bog alternating with stretches in peaceful stands of pine forest. There are two loops; one of 3km, and one of about 10km. No camping is allowed, but there's a simple shelter and a couple of fireplaces. The entrance is on Route 66, 20km south of Ruovesi; you pass some sinister-looking military buildings on the way to the carpark.

### Kalela

The most celebrated artist of the National Romantic Era, Akseli Gallen-Kallela painted most of his famous *Kalevala* works in this studio (☎ 476 0623; www.kalela.net; admission depending on exhibition €5-8; ☎ 10am-5pm mid-Jun-mid-Aug), which he also designed and helped build in the forest wilderness near Ruovesi. Exhibitions are held here in summer; to get here, follow main road No 66 5km south from the village of Ruovesi, then turn east. It's 3km to Kalela along a gravel road.

### Ruovesi

Once voted the most beautiful village in Finland, Ruovesi, just off Route 66, retains much of its charm and is the best place to stay along Route 66. There is not much to see or do in the village, but if you have a car it makes a good base for exploring the area's attractions and scenic lakeshores. The **local museum** (☎ 050 514 6475; €2; admission €2; ☎ 1-7pm Jun-mid-Aug) covers local history and includes a collection of 18th-century farm buildings.

The lakes around here are prime fishing country and teem with pike, perch, pike-perch (zandel) and trout. **Kalatiira** (☎ 0400 250 365; www.fishinginfinland.com/kalatiira; Haukkamaantie 93) is an excellent outfit who organize fishing excursions. They'll arrange permits and equipment; even more fun are their winter ice-fishing trips; as well as the traditional method, they've also pioneered ice net-fishing. It's best to book a week or so in advance, but it's worth a try even if you didn't. They also offer guided hikes in the area.

**Haapasaari Holiday Village** (☎ 044-080 0290; www.ruovedenhaapasaarenmatkailu.fi; Haapasaarentie 5; tent sites €15, cabins from €40, 4-8-person cottages €95/170) is a great place to stay on a small islet north of the village, connected by a causeway. There's water all around, and fabulous self-contained cottages available year-round; they have a sauna, barbecue and fully equipped kitchen. The cabins are simpler, but also have simple cooking facilities. It's great for kids, with a large play area. You may be able to negotiate a substantial discount when things are quiet.

The rustic organic **Ylä-Tuuhonen Farm** (☎ 472 6426; www.yla-tuuhonen.fi; Tanhuantie 105; s/d from €35/55; ☎ ☎) is perfect for getting away from things in the Finnish wilderness. It's run by a generous-hearted owner, who offers three pretty rooms (sharing two bathrooms) and use of an excellent kitchen and lounge. You can also sleep in one of the old log barns, converted to a cosy cottage. It's by a lake, and there's plenty to be doing, and kids will enjoy the docile animals roaming around. To get there from Ruovesi, head 9km north on the Virrat road, then turn right onto the 3481 at Mustajärvi (signposted to Innala). Continue for another 9km, and the farmhouse is signposted on the left.

**Hotel Ruovesi** (☎ 476 2273; Ruovedentie 44; s/d €39/61; ☎ ☎) The better of the two dullish hotels in the centre of Ruovesi.

Several buses a day connect Ruovesi with Tampere and other places in the region. The SS *Tarjanne*, travelling along the Poet's Way between Tampere and Virrat, stops at Ruovesi; see p174 for more information.

### Helvetinjärvi National Park

The main attraction of this national park is the narrow **Helvetinkolu gorge**, probably created as the ice moved the huge rocks apart some 10,000 years ago. The scene inspired the design of the Finnish pavilion at the Sevilla World Expo in 1992. There are numerous trails to follow, including a walk to **Haukanieta**, a sandy beach and popular camping spot on the shores of Haukkajärvi. You can pitch a tent for the night at designated camp sites in the park and there's a free hut at Helvetinkolu. To get there from Route 66, take the signposted road via Pohio village, which heads off west from the main road a kilometre north of the northern end of Ruovesi.

### Virrat

pop 7943

The town of Virrat is the end point for some ferry cruises from Tampere. It is useful to have a bicycle with you to continue exploring the region. There's a **tourist office** (☎ 485 1276; www.virrat.fi; Virtaintie 26; ☎ 9am-3pm Mon-Fri) in the town hall building, about 1km from the ferry dock. Even when it's shut, you can still grab a map and brochures from the hall.

While the harbour is pretty, the centre of Virrat brings an abrupt end to any romantic dreaming on the Poet's Way or Route 66; it's ugly and functional. The best place to stay is **Domus Virrat** (☎ 475 5600; Sipiläntie 3; dm/s/d €18/37/58; ☎ Jun-mid-Aug; ☎ ☎), just uphill from the harbour. It's a fairly institutional summer hotel but has good facilities including kitchen, tennis court and sauna. It also has an HI-affiliated hostel beds.

**Lakari Camping** (☎ 475 8639; Lakarintie; tent sites €15, cabins from €33 ☎ May-Sep), 7km east of the town centre, is a beautifully-situated camping ground between two lakes. It has tent sites, cabins and well-equipped cottages as well as a beach and plenty of trees.

Several buses a day connect Virrat to Tampere and other towns in the region. The Poet's Way cruises from Tampere end here; see p174 for more information.

### Virtain Perinnekylä

About 5km northwest of Virrat along road 23, **Tradition Village** (☎ 472 8160; Herrasentie 16; admission €5; ☎ noon-6pm mid-Jun-mid-Aug) is a sprawling open-air museum featuring four main museum buildings, handicraft shops and a restaurant with a lavish buffet lunch. Most attractions are open daily from late May to late August.

The **Talomuseo** has furniture, traditional Sunday decorations from the 1840s and a smoke sauna. The **Metsäkämpämuseo** features a large house and two small huts once used by loggers. The **Sotaveteraanien museo-huone**, or War Veteran Museum Room, has guns and other things that were used during WWII. The **Kanavamuseo** has an exhibition relating to the canal.

**Tuulimylly** is a restored windmill dating from 1828. The nature trail or the gravel road (old road No 66) will take you to **Her-rasen Lintutorni**, a bird-watching tower that provides a good view of birdlife on Lake Toisvesi bay.

**Kenttälainnoitusalue**, the area near the canal, was used by Russian troops as a depot during the war in 1808. Today the area has renovated trenches and a bunker.

### KEURUU

☎ 014 / pop 11,260

The happy, shiny, little town of Keuruu is on the northern shore of Lake Keurus-selkä and boasts one of the most interesting wooden churches in Finland. There is a **tourist office** (☎ 751 7144; Multiantie 5; ☎ 9am-4pm Mon-Fri Jun-Aug) in the town hall.

Keuruu's fascinating **wooden church** (admission €1; ☎ 11am-5pm Jun-Aug), built in 1758, has superb portraits of Bible characters (although the artist didn't complete the set, due to a pay dispute), and photos of the mummified corpses buried below the chancel. There's also a set of stocks for miscreants who didn't show up at church often enough.

It's worth noting that the fabulous wooden church at Petäjävеси (p135) is only 28km east of here.

There are **lake cruises** on the MS *Elias Lönnrot*, a paddle boat, from early June to mid-August. It has service to the town of Mänttä once weekly (single/return €13.50/20, three hours) and more frequent services to other destinations.

### MÄNTTÄ

☎ 03 / pop 6578

The reason for visiting the industrial town of Mänttä, about 30km south of Keuruu, is to see the Serlachius museum, one of the best art collections in Finland. The town has a **tourist office** (☎ 474 0070; Länsitorikatu 5; ☎ 11am-6pm summer).

The private home of Gösta Serlachius, of the dynasty that owns the huge paper factory that dominates the town, is now the **Gösta Serlachius Museum of Fine Arts** (☎ 474 5511; www.serlachiusartmuseum.fi; adult/child €6/1; ☎ 11am-6pm Tue-Sun May-Aug, 2-8pm Wed, noon-5pm Thu-Sun Sep-Apr). Situated 2km east of the town centre in elegant grounds, it houses an excellent collection of Finnish art. All the names from the Golden Age are here, including seemingly dozens of Gallen-Kallelas, and plenty of Edelfelts and Schjerfbeckes, as well as Wickström sculptures. Look out for a mischievous painting of Gallen-Kallela getting pissed with his mate Sibelius, and Hugo Simberg's whimsical *Entrance to Hades*. There's also a sizeable

European collection, including a fine deposition scene by Van der Weyden.

**Honkahovi Art Centre** (☎ 474 7005) is another mansion belonging to the Serlachius family. It's a 1938 Art Deco building containing temporary art exhibitions. You can walk between Honkahovi and the Museum of Fine Arts via a trail around Lake Melasjärvi.

In Mänttä itself, the Art Nouveau **church** (1928) was financed by the factory, and has unique woodcarvings on the altar and pulpit.

The HI-affiliated **Mänttä Hostel** (☎ 488 8641; Koulukatu 6; dm €17; ☹ Jun–mid-Aug) is in the modern dormitory building of a school, not far from the centre.

### Getting There & Away

In summer, you can catch the MS *Elias Lönnrot* from Keuruu. Otherwise, there are several buses a day to Mänttä from Tampere (€14.20, 1½ to 1¾ hours). The bus station is 700m west of the centre, on the way to the gallery.

## HÄME REGION

### HÄMEENLINNA

☎ 03 / pop 47,178

Dominated by its namesake, the majestic Häme Castle, Hämeenlinna (Swedish: Tavastehus) is the capital of the Province of Häme and the oldest inland town in Finland, founded in 1649. However, there had been a trading settlement at this location from the 9th century. After the Swedes built the castle on a crusade to Finland in the 13th century, Hämeenlinna developed into an administrative, educational and garrison town.

Hämeenlinna's partly cobbled town centre is pleasantly small and navigable, there are enough sights to keep you busy for a day, and its location on the motorway between Helsinki and Tampere keeps it firmly on the tourist route. A great way to arrive or depart from here is by ferry from Tampere.

### Information

**City tourist office** (☎ 621 3373; www.hameenlinna.fi; Raatihuoneenkatu 11; ☹ 9am–5pm Mon, 9am–4pm Tue–Fri, also 10am–2pm Sat May–Aug) You'll find plenty of information and a free Internet terminal here.

**Häme Tourist Service** (☎ 621 2388; www.hameenmatkailu.fi; Linnankatu 6; ☹ 8am–4pm Mon–Fri) Sells

tickets for lake cruises and books accommodation at hotels and cabins throughout the region.

**Post office** (Palokunnankatu 13–15, 13100 Hämeenlinna; ☹ 9am–8pm Mon–Fri) Near the bus station.

**Public library** (Lukiokatu 2; ☹ Mon–Sat) Has half a dozen Internet terminals at no charge, but must be prebooked.

### Sights & Activities

Despite its small size, Hämeenlinna has a wealth of museums and other attractions.

### HÄME CASTLE & MUSEUMS

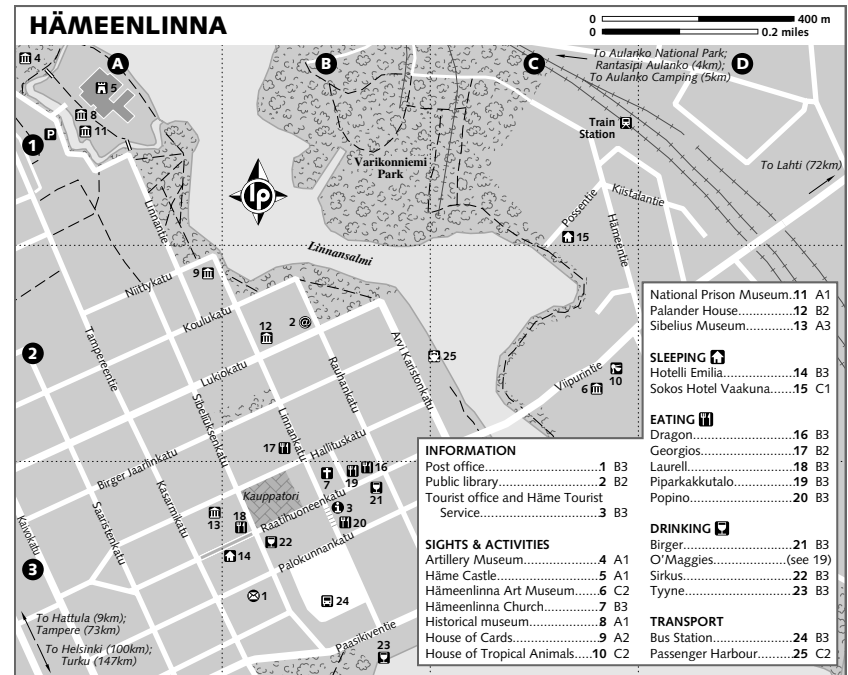
The bulky red-brick **Häme Castle** (☎ 675 6820; admission €5; ☹ 10am–6pm May–mid-Aug, 10am–4pm mid-Aug–Apr) is the symbol of Hämeenlinna and its most significant attraction. Construction of the castle started during the 1260s by Swedes, who wanted to establish a military redoubt against the power of Novgorod. It was originally built on an island, but to the annoyance of the defenders, the lake receded and necessitated the building of new defensive walls. It never saw serious military action and, after the Russian takeover, was converted into a jail. The last prisoners left in the 1980s and extensive renovations of the castle were finally completed in 1991.

The inside has been substantially rebuilt and now houses a museum displaying period costumes, furniture and various exhibitions, some related to the castle (its history and archaeology). Free guided tours in English are given hourly from June to August; if you don't read Finnish or Swedish this is the only way you will really appreciate the structure, as the English pamphlets are uninformative.

Around the castle are three **museums** which can be visited with the castle on a combined ticket (€12).

### National Prison Museum

The old prison block near the castle has been converted into a **museum** (☎ 621 2977; adult/child €4/1; ☹ 11am–5pm) where you can visit a solitary confinement cell or admire the graffiti left by former inmates. The most interesting bit is the three cells, left more or less as they were when the inmates departed, along with a brief description of their occupants' crime and lifestyle. There's also a sauna, where prisoners would sometimes violently settle disputes, as they were not accompanied by guards. The building was last used as a prison in 1993.



### Historical Museum

Next to the Prison Museum, the **historical museum** (☎ 621 2979; adult/child €4/1; ☹ 11am–5pm) is a relatively new display showcasing the local Häme area through the ages – from around the 18th century to the present – through models, photographs, costumes and bits of memorabilia. There's a replica of an early bank, and lots of pop-culture memorabilia.

### Artillery Museum

There are numerous museums devoted to the Finnish involvement in WWII, but this one takes the cake. It's huge. The **museum** (☎ 682 4600; admission €6; ☹ noon–5pm Oct–Apr, 10am–6pm May–Sep) consists of three floors packed with war memorabilia, and outside is a collection of phallic heavy artillery big enough to start a war on several fronts.

### SIBELIUS MUSEUM

Johan Julius Christian (Jean) Sibelius, the most famous Finnish composer, was born in Hämeenlinna in 1865 and went to school here, but surprisingly the town makes little fuss about this fact. His childhood home has

been converted into a small and unassuming **museum** (☎ 621 2755, Hallituskatu 11; €3; ☹ 10am–4pm May–Aug, noon–4pm Sep–Apr) with only a small plaque on the side to alert you to the fact that there's something of interest inside. The four rooms contain photographs, letters, his upright piano and some family furniture. It's a likeable place, although uninformative about his life; it's lovely if you coincide with the resident pianist, who often plays at weekends. There are also regular concert performances, free with an entry ticket.

### HÄMEENLINNA ART MUSEUM

The town's pleasing **art museum** (☎ 621 3017; Viipurintie 2; admission €5–6; ☹ noon–6pm Tue–Sun, noon–8pm Thu) is housed in a former grain store designed by CL Engel and has an interesting collection of Finnish art from the 19th and 20th centuries. Notable is Gallen-Kallela's painting of the Kalevala's final scene, with the shaman Väinämöinen leaving Finland, displaced by a Jesus-like baby that symbolizes the arrival of Christianity. Other scenes from the epic are painted on the ceiling. There are a couple of Schjerfbeck, including a *Rigoletto*



### JEAN SIBELIUS

Born in 1865 in Hämeenlinna, Jean Sibelius started playing piano when he was nine and composed his first notable work at age 20. During the cultural flowering that inspired Finland's independence, Sibelius provided the nation with music that complemented its literature and visual arts. Sibelius was fascinated by mythology and one of his greatest inspirations was the *Kalevala*, the Finnish epic compiled by Elias Lönnrot in 1833.

In 1892 Sibelius gained international recognition for his tone poem *En Saga*, and in 1899 composed the *Finlandia* symphony, a piece which has come to symbolise the Finnish struggle for independence.

Sibelius experimented with tonality and rejected the classical sonata form, building movements from a variety of short phrases that grow together as they develop. His work, particularly the early symphonies, is notable for its economical orchestration and melancholic mood.

In 1892 he married Aino Järnefelt (sister of the painter Eero Järnefelt) and together they had six daughters. The family moved to a new home, Ainola, north of Helsinki, in 1904; this is where Sibelius composed five of his seven symphonies. Ainola is now preserved as a museum that is open to the public in summer (p88).

Sibelius studied in Berlin and Vienna and visited the USA in 1914 as an honorary doctor at Yale University. In later life he wrote incidental music for plays and a number of choral works and songs. He died in 1957, at the age of 92.

There's a Sibelius Festival in Loviisa, where he had a summer home, and the excellent Sibelius Museum in Turku (p198) is devoted to the composer and his musical instruments, and frequently holds concerts. It's a terrific introduction to the music of Finland's greatest composer.

painted when she was just 19, and a beautiful wooden lynx and cubs by Jussi Mäntynen. The building opposite houses the temporary exhibitions, which are invariably excellent.

### HOUSE OF TROPICAL ANIMALS

There's nothing like a reptile house on a winter's day, and this small **tropical zoo** (☎ 676 5773; Viipurintie 4; admission €7; ☎ 11am-7pm), next to the art museum, is something different for Finland. It houses an interesting collection of our scaly brethren – including snakes and alligators – as well as birds and fish.

### HOUSE OF CARDS

Hundreds of postcards are displayed at this small, quirky **museum of postcards** (Korttialto; ☎ 616 9502; Niittykatu 1; admission €1.70; ☎ 10am-5pm, closed Mon Sep-Apr). Some of the cards on display date back over a century and contain the original handwritten 'wish you were here...' messages. And people just don't have handwriting like they did in the good old days. There are also temporary thematic exhibitions. The museum gift shop sells a great range of cards, and there's also a café here.

### PALANDERIN TALO

An upper middle-class home built in 1861, the historic **Palander House** (☎ 621 2967; Linnankatu

16; adult/child €4/1; ☎ noon-3pm Jun-Aug, closed Mon-Fri Sep-May) is filled with period furnishings, including Art Nouveau furniture and copper utensils. A guided tour in English (every half hour) is included with admission.

### HÄMEENLINNA CHURCH

Dating from 1798 the town **church** (☎ 10am-6pm Jun-Aug, 11am-1pm Sep-May) was designed by Louis Jean Depréz, court painter to King Gustav III of Sweden. It is modelled on the Pantheon in Rome.

### AULANKO NATIONAL PARK

This beautiful park, northeast of the town centre, was founded early in the 20th century by Hugo Standertskjöld, who dreamt of a Central European-style park with ponds, swans, pavilions and exotic trees. He spent a fortune to achieve his goal and the result was Aulanko. Although the best way to explore it is on foot, the sealed one-way road loop is accessible by private car. An observation tower in a granite, fortress-style building is open daily in summer (free) and gives superb views. There's a nature trail in the park and a lakeside golf course.

Buses 2, 13 or 17 will take you to Aulanko from Hämeenlinna centre, but it's only 6km away (turn left on Aulangontie just east of

the railway tracks) and makes a pleasant bike ride. The park's **visitor centre** (☎ 621 3750; ☎ 10am-8pm Wed-Sun mid-Aug-May, daily Jun-mid-Aug) will supply you with a map.

### Tours

Hämeenlinna is on Lake Vanajavesi at the southern tip of a lake network that stretches north to Tampere. See p186 for details of lake ferries.

On Friday and Saturday in summer (Midsummer to mid-August), the **MS Wanaja** (☎ 020-741 1770) cruises the lake all evening; picking up passengers from the dock at Arvi Karistonkatu 8 every two hours. It's essentially a booze cruise, but a good way to spend the evening; it costs €6 to step on board and you can stay as long as you like.

### Sleeping

There are no hostels in Hämeenlinna.

**Hotelli Emilia** (☎ 612 2106; www.hotelliemilia.net; Raatihuoneenkatu 23; s/d €62/82, Sat, Sun & summer €57/76; ☎ ☒ ☑) This is the cheapest hotel in town and is something of a bargain. Right in the heart of things, its rooms are modern, with crisp white sheets and air-conditioning. There's a sauna, bar, friendly management and a good buffet breakfast.

**Sokos Hotel Vaakuna** (☎ 020-123 4636; www.sokoshotels.fi; Possentie 7; s/d €101/122, d Sat, Sun & summer €84; ☎ ☒ ☑ ☑) Across the river from the town centre and very near the train station, this attractive modern hotel has been designed to echo Häme Castle, of which many rooms have a view across the lake. There's the usual array of restaurants and bars; the rooms have plenty of natural light and all the mod cons.

**Rantasipi Aulanko** (☎ 658 801; www.rantasipi.fi; s/d €120/144, d Sat, Sun & summer €89; ☎ ☒ ☑ ☑) This lakeside place in Aulanko National Park has a long tradition and is considered one of the best hotels in the region. Its location, between the lake and the forest park, could not be better, but it's essentially just a big conference hotel with lots of facilities, including five saunas, restaurants and an adjacent golf course. There's plenty for kids to do, and large family rooms.

**Aulanko Camping** (☎ 675 9772; dm €10, tent & van sites €15, cabins €43-61; ☎ May-Sep) On the edge of a beautiful nature park, this is the closest camping ground to the city. There are also fully self-contained five-person cottages for

€70. It's located beyond the main body of the park, on the shores of Aulangonjärvi. It's signposted Aulangon Lomäkylä.

### Eating

**Piparkakkutalo** (☎ 648 040; Kirkkorinne 2; pasta €10-12, mains €11-23; ☎ lunch & dinner) This place, one block east of the church, is easily the best restaurant in Hämeenlinna and everyone's favourite for a gourmet meal. Dishes range from inexpensive pasta and vegetarian to reindeer, wild boar and ostrich. The restaurant is in a historic 1906 shingled house with period décor, formerly the home of artist Albert Edelfelt. The name means 'gingerbread house'.

**Georgios** (☎ 682 8884; Linnankatu 3; mains €8-16; ☎ lunch & dinner Tue-Sat, lunch only Mon) Just off the kauppatori, this authentic Greek restaurant is one of the town's best places to eat. As well as the expected but comforting Acropolis 'n' Apollo décor, the food is excellent, with great Greek salads, dips and tender meat dishes.

**Popino** (☎ 653 2555; Raatihuoneenkatu 11; mains €8-18; ☎ 11am-10pm Mon-Sat, noon-8pm Sun) Tucked away where the steps divide Linnankatu into two levels, just behind the tourist office, is a fine pizza and pasta restaurant. As well as pizza there are meat and fish dishes and lunch specials for €7.50. It's stylish, but informal and family friendly, with a play area for young kids.

**Dragon** (☎ 612 1858; Raatihuoneenkatu 8A; mains €10-16; ☎ 11am-10pm Mon-Thu & Sun, 11am-11pm Fri & Sat) The best of the town's Chinese restaurants, this is in a cellar on the main street through town, with soothing décor and a couple of intimate nook-tables. Although it's not cheap, the portions are generous and the service good.

**Laurell** (☎ 467 7722; Sibeliuksenkatu 7; ☎ 8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-4pm Sat, 11am-5pm Sun) This spacious café on the kauppatori is a popular meeting spot for locals. There's an appetizing selection of squishy cakes, rolls, pastries and pasties, and another branch in the same building as the tourist office.

### Drinking & Entertainment

**O'Maggie's** (☎ 648 0450; Kirkkorinne 2; ☎ from 4pm) A very cosy Irish pub in the same building as Piparkakkutalo. Since there's no terrace it fills up later in the evening during summer, but it's definitely the place to be

in winter when there's weekly live Irish music.

**Birger** (☎ 570 9777; Raatihuoneenkatu 5; ☎ 4pm-midnight or later) This relaxed pub is typical of a certain sort of Finnish bar, with comfortable seating and a restrained, peaceful atmosphere (at least early in the night). The friendly owner stocks an excellent range of bottled beer from around the world.

**Sirkus** (☎ 633 6391; Sibeliuksenkatu 2; admission €5-7; ☎ 10pm-4am Wed, Fri & Sat) This is the main live music and nightclub venue with regular rock acts. All three nights are fairly different. There's live music on Wednesdays, while Saturdays are a more sophisticated scene with a minimum age of 24.

In summer the floating boat-bar **Tynee** (Paasikiventie; ☎ from 11am), south of the bus station, is a fun place for a beer.

## Getting There & Away

### BUS

Hourly buses between Helsinki (€18.90, 1½ hours) and Tampere (€14, one hour) stop in Hämeenlinna at the central bus station. From Turku, there are eight buses daily (€23.20, two hours).

### BOAT

Leaving from Hämeenlinna's passenger harbour, **Finnish Silverline** (☎ 03-212 4804; www.finnishsilverline.com) has a ferry to Tampere (€39, 8½ hours, 11.30am, June to late August). The route goes via Visavuori, where there's a one-hour stopover.

The passenger harbour is on Arvi Karistonkatu 8, just north of the Rantakasino beer terrace.

### TRAIN

The train station is 1km northeast of the town centre, on the other side of the bridge. Trains between Helsinki (€16.70, one hour, hourly) and Tampere (€14.30, 40 minutes, hourly) stop at Hämeenlinna. From Turku (€20.60, 1½ hours), change trains in Toijala.

## HÄMEENLINNA TO TAMPERE

There are several interesting sights just off the main highway between Tampere and Hämeenlinna.

**Pyhän Ristin Kirkko** (Church of the Holy Cross; admission €2.80; ☎ 11am-5pm Jun-Aug) in Hattula, only 9km north of Hämeenlinna, is one of Finland's oldest and most memorable churches.

Dating from the early 1400s, the interior is filled with fabulous naïve frescoes (early 16th century). They tell the main stories of the Bible as you go around the nave; the Tree of Jesse in the sacristy is particularly fine. As this was probably the nearest that most of the parishioners ever got to being able to read, it must have been an awe-inspiring place for them; it still is. The **old grain store** built in 1840, close to the old church, houses the information office and sells handicrafts.

The church is easy to reach from Hämeenlinna by public transport; take bus 5, 6 or 16. Take something warm to wear if you plan a lengthy look at the interior.

### Iittala

Iittala, a village on the highway 23km northwest of Hämeenlinna, is best known for its famous glass factory, which sells its products under the same name.

**Iittala Glass Centre** (☎ 0204-393 512; Lasikeskus; ☎ 9am-8pm May-Aug, 10am-6pm Sep-Apr) is opposite the bus terminal. Around the corner, the **glass museum** (☎ 0204-396 230; admission €2) exhibits objects designed and manufactured locally. It also gives an insight into the history of Finnish design. It's free to watch craftspeople blowing glassware in the back room. The shop sells second-grade products at a 35% discount.

### Sääksmäki

This historical and scenic area northwest of Hämeenlinna is one of the highlights of the region.

**Rapolan Linnavuori** on Rapola Hill is the largest prehistoric fortress in Finland. There are fine views and you can follow a marked trail that will take you to 100 burial mounds on the western side of the hill. You can get to Rapola either by following the signs from the main road, about 25km northwest of Hämeenlinna, or by taking the narrow road, Rapolankuja, that passes by the privately owned Rapola estate.

Once the studio of Emil Wickström (1864-1942), a sculptor from the National Romantic era, **Visavuori** (☎ 03-543 6528; admission €6; ☎ 11am-7pm Tue-Sun, 11am-5pm Mon Jun-Aug, Tue-Sun 11am-5pm Sep-May) is the best-known sight in the region and well worth a visit. Stunningly situated on a ridge with water on both sides, it consists of three houses, the oldest of which was the home of Wickström, built

in 1902 in Karelian and Finnish Romantic styles and containing fantastic Art Nouveau furniture; it really brings the man to life and is worth visiting first. The beautiful studio next door, with dozens of models and sculptures, was built in 1903; the pervading smell of baking will force you to stop for a *pulla* (cardamon-flavoured bun) in the brick-vaulted café downstairs. Kari Paviljonki is dedicated to Kari Suomalainen, Emil Wickström's grandson. The best-known of Finland's political cartoonists, his long career spanned several decades and he was drawing up to his death in 1999. His cartoons are excellent; the ones that can be, are translated well. Perhaps even more amusing is the award from the US National Cartoonist Society in 1959 for his daring cartoons 'exposing the deceit of Communism'. Ferries from Hämeenlinna and Tampere stop at Visavuori in summer; Wickström was the curse of the local boatmen, who used to have to deliver to him huge slabs of marble.

Visavuori is about 4km east of the Hämeenlinna-Tampere motorway, just off Toijala road.

## HÄME OX ROAD

One of the oldest roads in Finland and still partly unpaved, the Ox Rd (Härkätie) winds its way through rural landscape between Hämeenlinna and Turku. It was both trade route and path of pilgrimage; in spite of the present name, most travel was on foot, with goods carried by horses rather than oxen.

The Härkätie runs roughly parallel to, and mostly south of, Hwy 10 (which opened in 1962), passing through Renko, Porras, Somero, Marttila and Lieto. At around 160km, the route can be cycled in two or three days.

Just west of the village of Porras and on the south side of Ruostejärvi is the **Häme Visitor Centre** (☎ 0205-644 630) with information on hiking and the natural environment. For more information see www.harkatie.net.

### Renko

Renko, 15km southwest of Hämeenlinna, is the first stop along the Ox Rd and is just off Hwy 10. The main attraction is the **Pyhän Jaakonkirkko** (church of St James), a 15th century structure with a curious octagonal shape. Next door is the local museum, **Härkätien Museo** (☎ 618 5933; free admission;

☎ 11am-2pm Sun in summer), a basic display of farming implements and clerical tools; upstairs are the carts and harnesses used for traditional transport. Although official opening hours are short, it often seems to be open at other times.

### Tammela

Tammela village is on the shores of Pyhäjärvi, 11km north of Porras and the Ox Rd. It stretches along the lake and is a service centre for the summer cottages around; there's a bank, ATM, post office, pub and a couple of cafés. It's worth visiting the huge supermarket to see what Finnish summer catering is all about; count the types of sausage! The old **Tammela church** dates from the early 16th century. It was enlarged in 1785 and is of prodigious length. Some mediaeval wooden sculptures line the walls but otherwise it's fairly unadorned.

North of Tammela village, the impressive **Mustiala Manor** (☎ 03-646 5519; ☎ 10am-4pm Mon-Fri, also 11am-3pm Sat in summer) was originally owned in the 16th century by Marshal Klaus Horn, a Swede. Now the estate houses an agricultural school, a small museum devoted to farming tools, and a brewery and restaurant.

Four kilometres east of central Tammela, and 7km north of Porras, the **Venesilta** (☎ 436 0077; Portaantie 225; tent sites €15, plus per person €1; cabins €40-75) camp site is one of the best places to bed down hereabouts. It's right by the lake and very peaceful. It's open all year; phone ☎ 040-551 7025 outside of summer.

### Saari Park

The scenery in **Saari Park** (☎ 03-434 1833), 4km north of Porras and 7km southeast of Tammela, inspired many painters during the National Romantic era. The attractive sand ridge is part of the estate of Saari, which includes a private manor nearby. The park allows public access to anyone any time. For the best view, climb the 20m **observation tower**. You can get the keys from the restaurant on the eastern side of the park.

### Somero

The Ox Rd town of Somero was founded in the 15th century. The **kivisakasti**, a stone building on the grounds of the old church, dates from that time. The church dates

from 1859. **Someron torpparimuseo** (☎ summer), the local museum, which is north of the centre, includes a windmill and peasants' houses that are very old.

### Jokioinen & Forssa

The town of Jokioinen, north of the Ox Rd, has a unique history. In the 16th century, King Erik XIV of Sweden (who later went insane) gave exclusive rights to the Swedish war hero Klaus Horn to establish an estate in the Jokioinen region. At the time of independence in 1917, it had grown to be the largest such estate in Finland.

The little **church** of Jokioinen (1631), 1km past the granary, is the second-oldest wooden church in Finland but renovations hide the original architecture.

Near Jokioinen, Forssa is the largest town in the region. Originally built on the cotton-spinning industry, it's not a particularly enthralling place, but has plenty of accommodation options and a tourist office.

### Getting There & Away

There are regular buses from Hämeenlinna to Renko, the first village on the Ox Rd route, and to all the other towns mentioned. Local buses connect the rest of the towns, mainly coming from the large industrial town of Forssa. However, it's easiest to explore the Ox Rd by private car or bicycle.

### LAHTI

☎ 03 / pop 98,281

One of Finland's major winter-sports centres, Lahti is a modern town about 100km north of Helsinki. It's a good place to go if you're interested in skiing, with a good museum on the sport, alongside the city's frighteningly high ski jumps. Lahti has hosted several world championships, most recently in 2001.

Founded in 1905, the city isn't hugely interesting in other respects, and lacks anything that could be called an 'old town'. Most of the downtown area, in fact, consists of a series of linked shopping centres. The 10,000 Karelian refugees who arrived after WWII have contributed their entrepreneurial spirit to what the locals call the 'Business City'. Lahti does make a good base for visiting nearby attractions. Its location by Vesijärvi (which is connected to Lake Päijänne) makes it the obvious place to start a ferry trip to

Jyväskylä. One of the largest lakes in Finland, Päijänne provides Helsinki with tap water.

### Information

**Public library** (☎ 812 511; Kirkkokatu 31; ☎ 10am-8pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat) Several free Internet terminals.

**Tourist information office** (☎ 877 677; www.lahtitravel.fi; Aleksanterinkatu 13; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri) Free Internet terminals; also makes hotel and transport bookings. There's a summer tourist booth at the harbour.

### Sights

#### SPORTS CENTRE

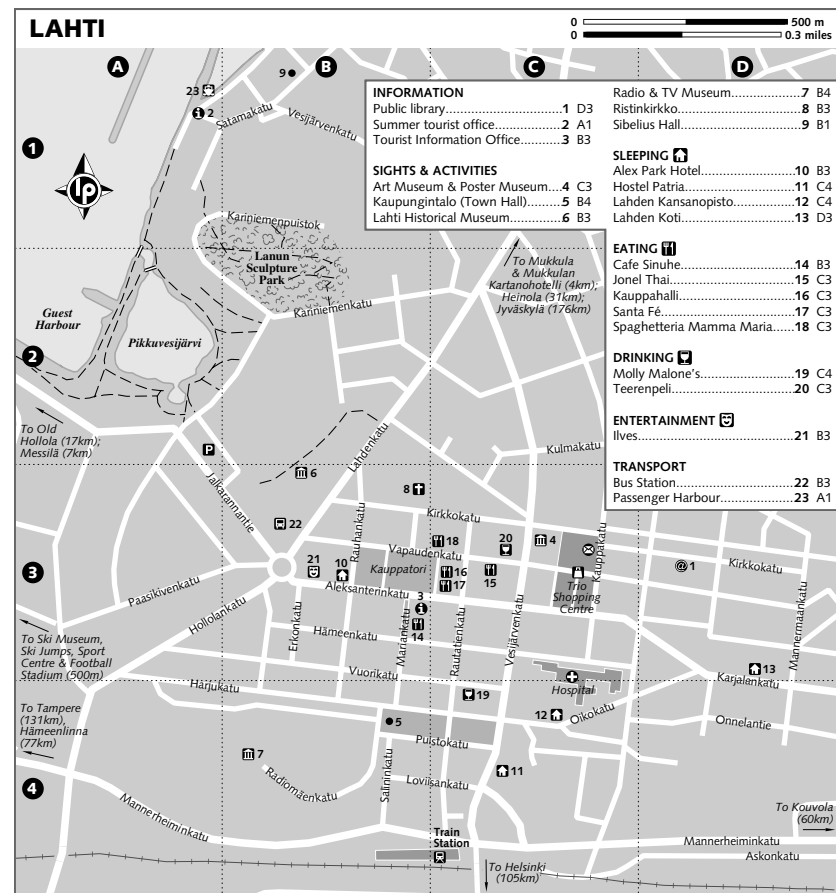
At the Sports Centre, a 10-minute walk west of town, things are dominated by three imposing ski-jumps, the biggest standing 73m high and stretching 116m. You'll often see high-level jumpers training here in summer. There's a whole complex here, including the football stadium, a summer swimming pool, ski tracks and the delightful **Ski Museum** (☎ 814 4523; admission €5; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 11am-5pm Sat & Sun). A history of skis includes some excavated examples from 2000 years ago, and Lahti's proud record as a winter sports centre is given plenty of treatment. In the next room the fun starts; frustrate yourself on the ski-jump simulator, then try the biathlon, skiing on Velcro before nailing five bullseyes with your rifle. A combined ticket (€7) will let you take the chairlift up to the observation terrace at the top of the ski-jump; great if there's someone practising, and good for the views in any event.

#### OTHER SIGHTS

The **Lahti Historical Museum** (☎ 814 4536; Lahdenkatu 4; admission €5; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 11am-5pm Sat & Sun) is in a beautiful old manor house. This guide was updated just before the triumphant re-opening after renovation; exhibits include the Klaus Holma collection of French and Italian furniture and medieval and Renaissance art.

In the heart of town in a modern office building, the **Art Museum & Poster Museum** (☎ 814 4547; Vesijärvenkatu 11; admission €5; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 11am-5pm Sat & Sun) has temporary exhibitions of sculpture and paintings, and an off-beat collection of advertising posters from yesteryear.

The **Radio & TV Museum** (☎ 814 4512; Radiomäki Hill; admission €5; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 11am-5pm Sat & Sun), on a hill just south of the



centre, has a collection of old radios and a working broadcasting studio from the 1950s. You can film and appear in your own TV broadcast or radio programme, guaranteed fun for kids.

The striking **Ristinkirkko** (Church of the Cross; Kirkkokatu 4; ☎ 10am-6pm summer, 10am-3pm winter) was designed by Alvar Aalto and finished in 1978. Although the exterior is made of brown brick, the interior is typically Aalto: wooden benches, white walls and, on the ceiling, four concrete rays emanating from the cross.

The Art Nouveau **Kaupungintalo** (town hall; Harjukatu 31) was designed by another famous Finnish architect, Eliel Saarinen. There are guided tours of the building at 2pm on Fri-

day. **Sibelius Hall** (☎ 81418; www.lahti.fi/sibeliustalo; Ankkurikatu 7), near the harbour on Vesijärvi, is a huge new concert-hall creation made from wood and glass.

### Activities

Although the public can't use the ski-jump at the **Sports Centre** (☎ 814 4570), there's still plenty for the average visitor to do. In winter, there is an ice-skating hall and a total of 145km of cross-country ski tracks, 35km of which are illuminated. Skiing and skating gear can be rented in the main building. In summer the centre offers bike trails and a large outdoor **swimming pool**. FC Lahti also play their home games at the stadium here.



There's also plenty to do out at **Mukkula** (☎ 753 5380; Rietaniemenkatu 10; ☹ Jun-Aug) in summer. The lakefront location, 5km from Lahti, has boat and canoe hire, tennis, mini-golf, beach volleyball and bicycles for rent.

As well as the longer lake trips mentioned on opposite, in summer there are several daily 1½-hour return **cruises** from the passenger harbour, as well as evening 3½-hour cruises to the Vääksy Canal and back on the **MS Suometar** (adult/child €14/7). Contact the tourist office for times and bookings.

## Festivals & Events

Unsurprisingly, Lahti hosts several annual winter sports events including the **Ski Games** (www.lahtiskigames.com) in early March. There are also some good summer music festivals such as **Jazz at the Marketplace** (www.jazztori.com), a week-long street festival in early August, and the **Sibelius Festival** (www.sinfonialahti.fi), with performances by the Lahti Symphony Orchestra in mid-September.

## Sleeping

**Lahden Koti** (☎ 752 2173; www.lahdenkoti.fi; Karjalankatu 6; s/d studio apt €62/73, one-room apt €67/79, 3/4-person 2-room apt €95/124; ☹ ☹) In a renovated apartment building, this place has been converted into a very nice small hotel. All apartments are tastefully decorated and come with a well-equipped kitchen and a bathroom. There are generous family rates and plenty of choice of size and price.

**Mukkulan Kartanohotelli** (☎ 874 140; www.mukkulankartano.net; Rietaniemenkatu 10; s/d €70/85, simpler accommodation €45/70; ☹ ☹) In the old manor house at Mukkula, 5km north of Lahti, this is a romantic spot; the lakeside location is superb and the price very reasonable. There's an outdoor Jacuzzi and sauna a hop, skip and plunge from the water, and friendly staff. There's also a **camp site** (☎ 874 1442; www.mukku.lacamping.fi; tent sites per person/2-4 people €8/14; ☹ Jun-Aug, ring for opening at other times) and a summer HI-hostel (no dorms) in the grounds.

**Lahden Kansanopisto** (☎ 878 1181; www.lahdenkansanopisto.sci.fi; Harjukatu 46; dm €24, s/d €29/47, with bathroom €39/52; ☹ Jun-mid-Aug; ☹ ☹) The local folk college is a welcoming place to stay in summer. It's friendly, HI-affiliated, and has a variety of rooms with beds (linen provided), as well as a well-equipped kitchen. The rooms are good, with desks

and bedside lamps, and the shared facilities more than adequate.

**Hostel Patria** (☎ 782 3783; Vesijärvenjatu 3; s/d €30/44; ☹) If Lahden Kansanopisto is not open, there's this simpler HI-affiliated guesthouse around the corner.

**Alex Park Hotel** (☎ 52511; www.alexpark.fi; Aleksanterinkatu 6; s/d €104/123, weekends €79/84, summer r €68; ☹ ☹ ☹ ☹) This is a central hotel that's long been a Lahti favourite. If you can find your way to the lifts through the melee of cafés, bars and nightclub downstairs, you'll discover well-appointed rooms, some of which overlook the market square. They are furnished in dark wood and are particularly good value in summer.

## Eating

Being a popular winter sports centre, some restaurants and cafés in Lahti have an interesting feature – glassed-in terraces for winter dining. It's not a gourmet capital, however.

**Café Sinuhe** (☎ 751 1620; Mariankatu 21; ☹ 6.30am-8pm Mon-Fri, 8am-4pm Sat, 10am-6pm Sun) Around the corner from the tourist office, this lively café is a Lahti staple. Folk stream in at all hours of the day for its mellow coffee or to buy a loaf of crusty bread. It has a few daily salads on the go and plenty of sweet things.

**Spaghetteria Mamma Maria** (☎ 751 6716; Vapaudenkatu 10; mains €7-15; ☹ lunch & dinner) This is an Italian restaurant with an authentic feel and stocks of Peroni beer, located on the central square. It's got bags of variety: heaps of pastas, pizzas, veals and steaks; the quantities are generous and it's pretty tasty. To round off, there's homemade gelati.

**Jonel Thai** (☎ 734 2958; Vapaudenkatu 15; mains €6.50-11.50; ☹ 11am-8.30pm Mon-Thu, 11am-9.30pm Fri & Sat, noon-8.30pm Sun) This is one of a couple of decent Thai restaurants near the centre. There's a filling lunch special for €7 as well as a take-away snack section.

**Sante Fé** (☎ 781 8007; Aleksanterinkatu 16; mains €8-15; ☹ lunch & dinner) On the southeast corner of the kauppatori is a busy Tex-Mex restaurant with a comfy, friendly bar and colourful terrace downstairs and dining room on the 1st floor. The menu features the usual nachos, fajitas, steaks and pastas.

## Drinking & Entertainment

**Teerenpeli** (☎ 042-492 5220; Vapaudenkatu 20; ☹ noon-1 or 2am) This is a great brewery pub

with a glassed-in terrace. It brews four beers on the premises, and sometimes sells *sahii*, the sweet Finnish homebrew-style beer. It's always lively with chatter and also does food.

**Molly Malone's** (☎ 525 2399; Vuorikatu 35; ☹ 4pm-1am) This is a laid-back Irish pub with live music on Friday and Saturday nights.

**Iives** (☎ 0600 007 007; www.finnkino.fi; Aleksanterinkatu 4) Lahti's main cinema has five screens and is very central. During the week, it's evening screenings only.

## Getting There & Away

**BUS**  
There are regular daily buses along the motorway from Helsinki (€18.90, 1½ hours), and frequent services to/from Tampere (€21.30, two hours), Jyväskylä (€25.60, three hours) and Turku (€32.30, 3½ hours).

## BOAT

From early June to mid-August **Päijänne Risteilyt Hildén Oy** (☎ 783 2515; www.paijanne-risteilytilden.fi) operates daily ferries from Lahti's passenger harbour to Heinola at 10am (one way/return €17/26, 4½ hours each way). The cruise goes via Vääksy and Kalkkinen canals. It also has a twice-weekly ferry to Jyväskylä at 10am on Tuesday and Thursday (€45, 10½ hours) from early June to early August.

## TRAIN

There are at least 15 direct trains per day from Helsinki (€15.70, 1½ hours) and Riihimäki. Travellers from Tampere change trains at Riihimäki.

## AROUND LAHTI

### Hollola

☎ 03

Hollola, west of Lahti, is the most historical place in this area. It used to be the major settlement around here until Lahti's rapid growth left the venerable parish as a pleasant rural backwater. These days there are two Hollolas – the modern town centre is on the highway 7km west of Lahti, but the old village and most of the attractions are 15km to 18km northwest of Lahti on the southern shores of Vesijärvi. To get there, you can either track north from the modern Hollola, or, better, take road 2956 from Lahti and follow Vesijärvi. It's close enough for a leisurely bike tour.

## SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Heading west along the lake from Lahti, the first place you'll reach is **Messilä**, where signposted off the road is a fine old estate with a golf course, guest harbour and winter ski slopes (see also p192). **Messilän Pajati** is a separate building featuring local craft (and a bakery).

**Pirunpesä** (Devil's Nest) is a steep rock cliff, near Messilä. A marked trail takes you there, or you can walk the entire 7km *luontopolku* (nature trail) that goes via a series of hills and offers some good views. One of these hills, **Tiirismaa**, is a downhill-skiing resort in winter.

Continuing along the lake road, and before reaching the old Hollola village, you'll see **Kutajärvi**, a resting place for migratory birds, on your left.

**Pyhäniemi Manor** (☎ 788 1466; admission €7; ☹ 11am-6pm Jun-Aug) is a wooden mansion, dubbed the 'Hollywood of Hollola' in the 1930s, when many Finnish films were shot here. It has had quite a colourful history; Swedish king Gustav III granted the estate to the Schmiedefelt family in 1780 and even visited it himself in 1783. The estate grew immensely and its industries included a sawmill, a wheel factory and a posh dairy that exported its products to St Petersburg.

On the shores of Vesijärvi, 17km northwest of Lahti, the large **Hollola church** (☎ 788 1351; free admission; ☹ 11am-6pm Jun-mid-Aug, 11am-4pm Sun mid-Aug-May) was once the heart of this parish, before Lahti grew up. It's an elegant late 15th-century structure with steep gables; the belltower was designed by the indefatigable Carl Engel in the 19th century. Mounted above the double nave are 10 fine polychrome wood sculptures of saints; also noteworthy are the elaborate coats of arms from the von Essen family and the 14th-century baptismal font and Pietà that were from the earlier, wooden church. There are English-speaking guides in summer. The church is marked 'Hollola kk' on signs and bus timetables.

Taking the first right after the church, you'll find two small local museums, both open Tuesday to Sunday. **Esinemuseo**, the large red building not far from the church, contains a collection of local paraphernalia, including a Stone Age axe. **Hentilä museum** features old buildings that have been transferred from nearby locations.

### WORTH THE TRIP

A great daytrip from Heinola is a visit to the Verla Mill, a complex of beautiful brick buildings enchantingly set by a stream about 40km southeast of Heinola. Built in 1882, it operated as a ground wood and board mill until 1964 and is incredibly well preserved, so much so that Unesco have listed it. Entry to the **Verla Mill Museum** (☎ 020-415 2170; adult/child €6/2; 🕒 10am-6pm Tue-Sun early-May-mid-Sep) is by guided tour (ring ahead to arrange an English one), and make sure you bring a picnic to have in the gardens or by one of the nearby lakes. If not, there's a café and restaurant here too. To get there, head just north of Heinola to the Kouvola turnoff, and follow that to Jaala, where there's a signposted left turn to Verla.

### Sleeping & Eating

**Messilä Estate** (☎ 86011; www.messila.fi; s/d €98/115, 4-person cottages €185; 📍 🚻 🚰) This place offers plenty of choices. There are modern hotel rooms, characterful accommodation in the 'old storehouse', plus a holiday village with self-contained cottages. The several restaurants here serve everything from gourmet cuisine to burgers and beers, and this is a popular venue in summer for live music and dancing.

**Camping Messila** (☎ 753 7006; www.campingmessila.fi; tent sites €15, cottage €55-185) This is a beautifully equipped holiday park next to the estate on Vesijärvi, 7km west of Lahti. There's a little swimming beach, a good café with a beer terrace, and a jetty perfect for some light strolling or fishing. It's open year-round and offers a host of summer and winter activities. They even keep a hole open in the ice for a hardy post-sauna dip!

### HEINOLA

☎ 03 / pop 20,910

Heinola is today overshadowed by Lahti to the south but is a much older town. It has a scenic waterfront setting, with the Jyrängönvirta River flowing through it. In addition to summer cultural attractions, Heinola serves as a starting point for scenic summer lake cruises. There's a **tourist office** (☎ 849 3615; Kauppakatu 10-12).

**Heinola Ridge** has a few attractions. The 1900 Harjupaviljonki pavilion is meant to look like a Japanese temple. In summer

there is an art exhibition here. Nearby, the tower offers good views. The **Heinola Bird Zoo** (☎ 715 2916; admission free; 🕒 10am-4pm) is an aviary housing more than 500 species. It also acts as a hospital for sick or injured birds.

The **Sauna World Championships** in mid-August are a test and a half of endurance, with plenty of beer consumed.

**Heinäsaari Camping** (☎ 0500-491 637; tent sites €12-14, cabins and cottages €34-120) on Heinäsaari, 1.5km from the town centre, is a great location with a range of simple cabins and some pretty swish cottages.

### Getting There & Away

There are buses roughly every 30 minutes from Lahti (€5.50 to €8, 20 to 40 minutes). Heinola is 136km north of Helsinki. Ferries from Lahti sail to Heinola in summer; see p191 for details.

### AROUND HEINOLA Onkiniemi

Situated around 25km north of Heinola on the road to Hartola, Onkiniemi is home to **Musta & Valkea Ratsu Nukketalot** (Black & White Horse Puppet House; ☎ 03-718 6959; Onkiniementie 222; 🕒 noon-4pm). *Nukketalot* (puppet houses) are extremely popular with Finnish kids, and here you can meet the puppets and even make your own. A family has created more than 350 hand puppets – some appearing regularly on TV – and give daily theatre performances (adult/child €7/5). Most people fall totally in love with the place, the people and the puppets.

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