

# Lahemaa Ring



## Lahemaa Ring – seven days in the vibrant peace and quiet of the oldest national park of Estonia

There are over 70 villages and more than 3000 inhabitants in Lahemaa National Park. To see and hear about what the locals do, where and how they have been living for generations – come and take a holiday on the Lahemaa Ring! You can tour the villages of the 50-year-old national park by bike or car or on foot, visit well-known tourism sites and experience the real life of Lahemaa. A week full of exciting places, beautiful scenery, local tastes, hospitable people and lively national culture; four lovely peninsulas, four outstanding manors, the unspoiled nature and active community of Lahemaa National Park are just waiting to be explored.

In the past, the lifestyles of the Lahemaa coastal village communities used to differ from those further inland. All four peninsulas are covered with forest with bogs in their centres while the settlements are located near the coast. The seaboard of Lahemaa is the area with the most erratics and fields of stones in Europe. Since the

soil in this area is stony and infertile, communities had to rely on the sea for their living. Besides fishing, men used to earn their income with transporting timber, shipbuilding and sea trade. Between the two world wars, the village economies flourished with smuggling but subsequently the Estonian coast became part of the border of the big Soviet Union and was guarded strictly. Locals were not allowed to go to the sea anymore, harbours

were closed and fishermen's boats were destroyed. Even though Estonia has been independent for more than 30 years, fishing as an occupation is still rare and the Lahemaa coastal villages are much used for summer holidays. The ruins of former Soviet army buildings strewn along the Lahemaa coast are part of military heritage that is worth visiting as much as the admirable coastal villages and beautiful nature.

The development of inland villages has been strongly influenced by the Baltic Klint, a limestone escarpment. Ancient settlements, old villages and manors are situated on the edge of the Klint and surrounded by alvars with junipers. The southern part of Lahemaa is wooded. The people living inland were mostly engaged with agriculture but there have also been some small industries in the area, several watermills and a cardboard factory. In 1874, the first brick factory in Estonia was built in Lõksa that started to influence the area.

Lahemaa National Park was formed to protect and present both the nature and the cultural heritage typical of Northern Estonia. The area is rich in Estonian national culture, which is very much kept alive through numerous community centres in active use and with the many choirs and folk-dance groups. When coming to Lahemaa not only should you explore the countryside to sense its peace and quietness

but also visit a local event or two to get the feeling of uniquely vibrant community life.

To go through the Lahemaa Ring on foot (120 km), you can use marked hiking trails. On the coast, follow Forest Trail, in the south RMK Oandu-Ikla hiking trail. A 10-kilometre long gap between Muuksi and Viru bog is not marked in nature, follow the map of the Lahemaa Ring there.

To go through the Lahemaa Ring by bicycle (200 km) or car, follow the map of the Lahemaa Ring. The trail is not marked in nature.

### Visit Lahemaa recommends:

- ★ To get a full experience, hire a local tour guide.
- ★ Come to Lahemaa by public transport, it is easy. Lõksa and Võsu are local transport hubs where you can eat, shop and rent a bike.
- ★ Rent a bike to go around Lahemaa.
- ★ Do not forget that Lahemaa is a national park and there are rules you have to obey.
- ★ Make a phone call before going to a private museum or farm. Out of season, check the opening hours, several smaller attractions are closed for winter.

Tourism information about Lahemaa (local guides, services, events, bike rentals etc) can be obtained from: [visitlahemaa.com](http://visitlahemaa.com) or on the phone: +372 5633 2211.



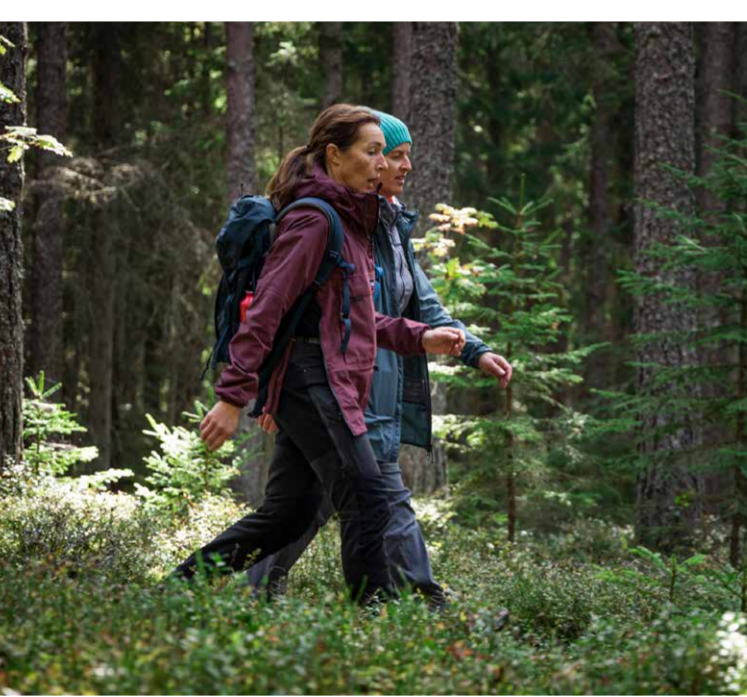
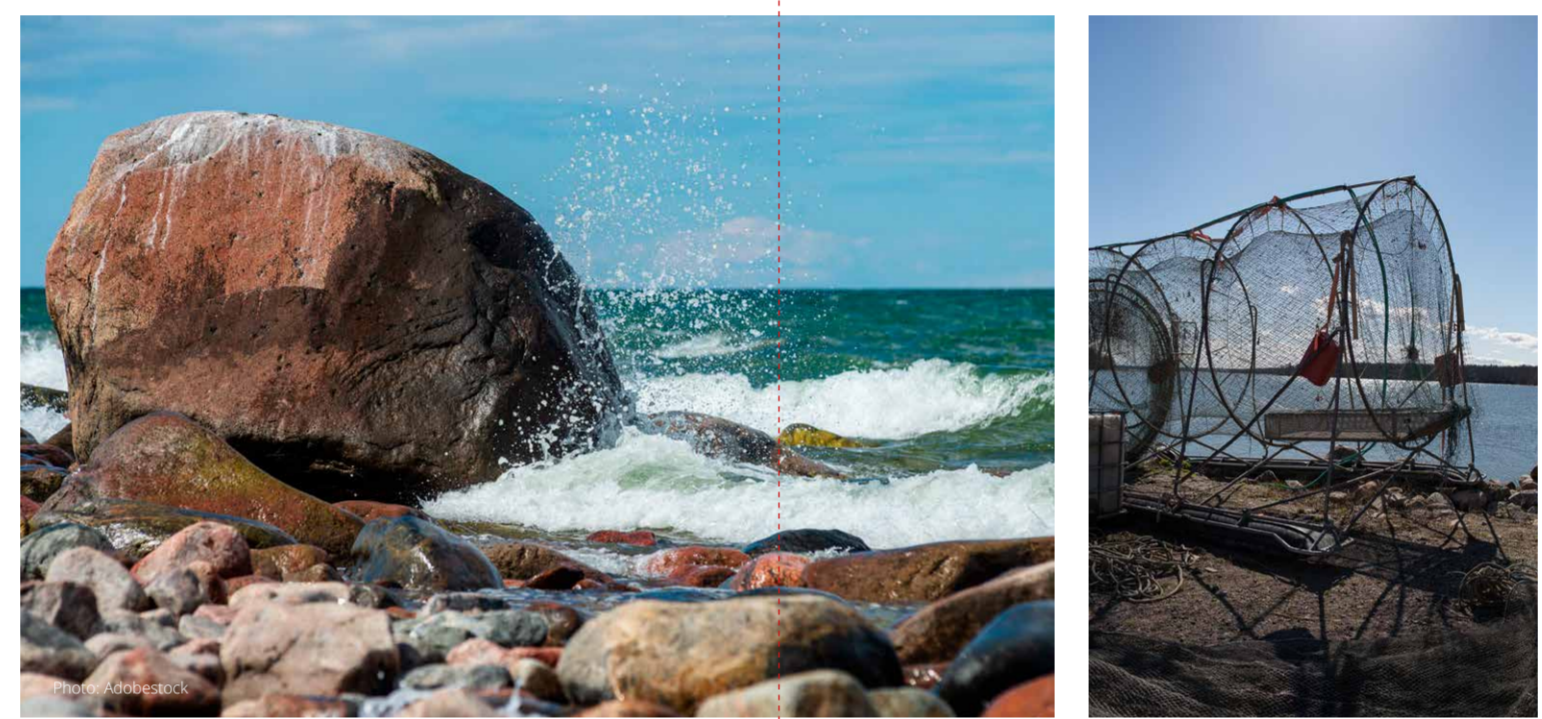
## TOP 10 on the Lahemaa Ring:

1. Viru bog study trail and observation tower;
2. Leesi village, community shop and church;
3. Hara harbour and military heritage;
4. Viinistu village, art museum and harbour;
5. Käsnu captains' village and maritime museum;
6. Võsu village, beach and harbour;
7. Altja fishing village and tavern;
8. Oandu visitor centre and hiking trails;
9. One of the manors from the Lahemaa Manor Ring;
10. One of the rocks from the Lahemaa Rocks.

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## Lahemaa rocks

Lahemaa is the land of big rocks that have been carried here from Finland by glacial ice and are therefore called glacial erratics. In Lahemaa, there are at least 20 erratics at least 10 m in diameter or at least 25 m in perimeter, more than anywhere in Europe. In the end of the 19th century Russian geologist Helmerson started studying erratics and mapped them in Lahemaa together with the baron of Palmse. One possibility to discover Lahemaa is to circle it by exploring the rocks. You can read more about Lahemaa rocks from the visitor centres in Palmse and Oandu and on the info board near Altja fishing net sheds



**1. Majakivi** (House rock) on the Juminda peninsula is the third largest erratic in Estonia. You can reach it by a 7-kilometre long study trail with an observation tower.

**2. Mardimiku rock** near the border of Lõksa town on the shore of the river Valgejõgi has got its name after a nearby farm.

**3. Mustkivi** (Black rock) on the seashore by Viinistu art museum is a baby stone where according to legend all the babies of the village have come from.

**4. Jaani-Tooma rock** in Kasispea has been one of the symbols of Lahemaa National Park and the best known erratics in Estonia.



**5. Tammispea rocks** The biggest of the Tammispea rocks is one of the highest erratics in Estonia.

**6. Käsnu boulder field**, which might be the biggest in the world, is situated in the forest near a hiking trail. When in Käsnu, you should also visit Vana-Jüri rocks with a beautiful view to the Saartneeme islet.



**7. Ojakivi** (Stream rock) in the forest near Võsu can be reached by a 2,5 km long hiking trail. Ojakivi is the third largest erratic in Lahemaa and the 14th in Estonia.

**8. Altja rock** by the fishing net sheds is the baby stone of Altja village. When any of the children wanted a brother or sister, they had to go and knock on the stone and soon a baby came from behind it.

**9. Kaarna kivi** (Raven rock) that is connected with many legends and love stories is situated by the sea in Vainupea. They say that you can get invigorating water from it and underneath it there is a passage to the underground world.

**10. Vahakivi** a sacrificial stone in Palmse has many names and is connected with several legends.

## Lahemaa Manor Ring

Lahemaa is known for its four excellent examples of manor culture. These were the first manors in Estonia where in the 1970s, after the establishment of the national park, renovations were started. All these four unique and magnificent manors, still loved by the Estonians, are worth visiting, and all together give a good overview of Lahemaa and North Estonian manor culture.

**1. Kolga manor**  
 Kolga manor belonged to the Swedish Stenbock family and was one of the biggest manor estates in the Baltics. Kolga is the only manor in Lahemaa, which is not yet renovated. You can take a tour with a local guide inside the grand main building. In summer, there is an art gallery, a café and different events are organised. The outbuildings house Kuusalu parish museum that is open all year round.

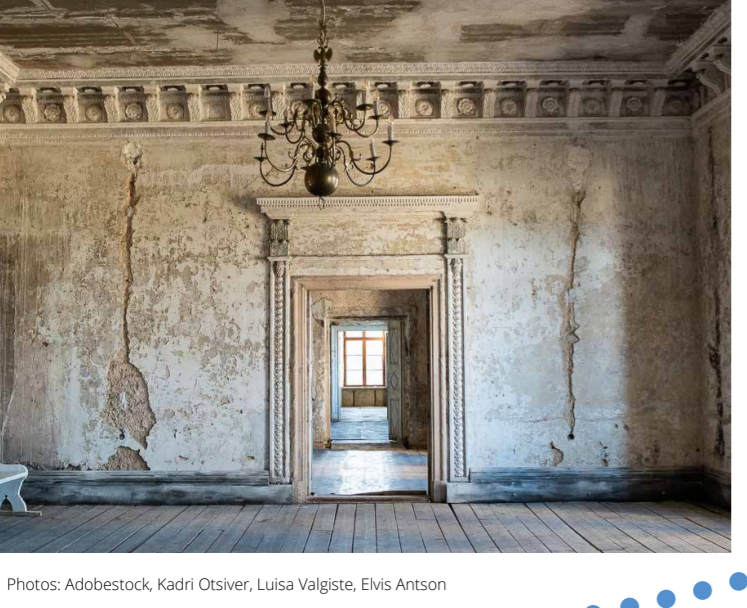
**2. Palmse manor**  
 Palmse is the centre of the Lahemaa National Park. It is the first manor ensemble in Estonia that was fully renovated in 1975-1985. Some of the members of the Pahlen family, the former owners of the manor, were important statesmen and scientists. Today the manor houses a visitor centre, a museum, a restaurant and two guesthouses. You should take a walk in the beautiful natural park, see a group of rocks called Kloostrikivid and the Brest pavilion with a stunning view. In summer, you have to buy a ticket to access the park.

**3. Sagadi manor**  
 Sagadi has for centuries been admired for its exemplary forestry system. During the time of Paul Eduard von Fock in 1835, the first forest management plan was created that was considered rather progressive. The manor now belongs to the State Forest Management Agency, houses a



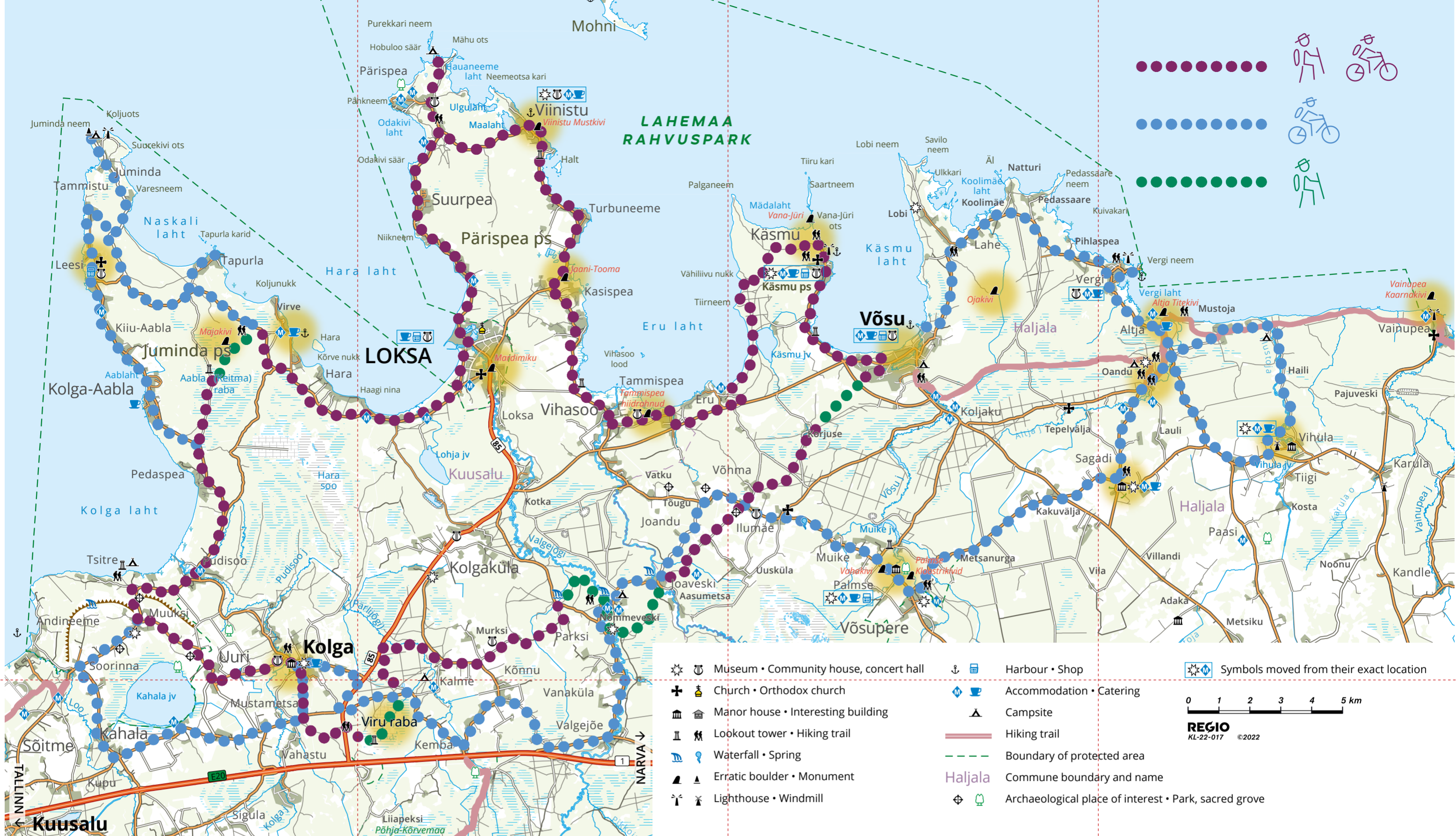
forest and a manor museum, a nature school, a hotel and a restaurant. It is marvellous to walk in the manor park with repaired roads and parkways, the dendropark and a colourful garden.

**4. Vihula manor**  
 The varied landscape of Vihula was skilfully used when designing the manor complex. The picturesque lake with high banks, native forest, English garden and the ensemble of numerous buildings seems romantic. The complex got this expression during the last masters the Schuberts who lived here until 1939. Today the manor houses a dashing restaurant and a luxurious spa-hotel and offers several possibilities for a wonderful vacation.



Photos: Adobestock, Kadri Otsiver, Luisa Valgiste, Elvis Antson





## Active community of the Juminda peninsula

The westernmost peninsula of Lahemaa has been named after the oldest village situated at its apex – the Juminda – which is connected with many legends. Nowadays the community of the 10 villages is well known for its active co-operation. They have established a voluntary sea rescue unit, a community house and a shop together.

glamping at Hara harbour.

**Camping:** RMK Juminda campsite.

**Catering:** MerMer and Johannes home restaurants at Kolga-Aabla, fast food at Leesi shop, restaurant at Hara harbour

**Beach:** Kolga-Aabla

### Did you know that:

- \* A dialect similar to Finnish used to be spoken on the peninsula.
- \* The small island of Hara used to have a sprat factory where more than 300 people worked.
- \* After the last war, there were bases for Soviet rockets and demagnetising submarines on the peninsula.
- \* In 1941 a sea battle with 15 000 casualties was held near Cape Juminda.

**Villages:** Puidiso, Pedaspea, Kolga-Aabla, Kiuu-Aabla, Leesi, Tammistu, Juminda, Tapurla, Virve, Hara.

**Approximate number of inhabitants:** 450

**Accommodation:** holiday houses Annenhof and Pärli at Puidiso, Klaukse at Kolga-Aabla, Leesikalda at Leesi and Kakupesa at Hara;

## Visit Lahemaa recommends visiting:

- \* Leesi village centre with a shop, a community centre, a cemetery and a church.
- \* Hara harbour with a history exhibition, where you can go boating and buy fish.
- \* Aabla bog with the third largest erratic boulder in Estonia Majakivi (House rock) and a 7-kilometre long study trail with an observation tower.
- \* 32-metre high Juminda lighthouse that still works and a monument dedicated to the sea battle.
- \* Coastal meadows and sheep at Tammistu Lammas.
- \* Veldi and Daughters Brewery at Leesi.
- \* Nurseries at Kiuu-Aabla and Tapurla.
- \* Allika shed museum at Virve.

## Grand Kolga manor and surroundings

Kolga was the grandest of Estonian manors. The buildings of Kolga manor are not renovated yet but the classicist complex still gives a majestic impression. There are several natural sites in the area: Nõmmeveski and Vasaristi waterfalls, Viru bog, Tsitre beach, Muuksi stronghold hill and ancient landscapes.

Uuri, Kahala, Tsitre, Muuksi, Andineeme, Soorinna

**Approximate number of inhabitants:** 900, in Kolga: 420

**Accommodation:** Nõmmeveski and Kõrgekald holiday houses at Nõmmeveski, Pärloja holiday house at Kalme, Hiie farm at Kahala, Laugu holiday house and Jõekääru camping at Sõitme

**Camping:** RMK Nõmmeveski and Kalmeoja campfire sites, RMK Tsitre campsite

**Catering:** Kotka gas station, Kolga manor summer café, Jõekääru at Sõitme. There are eating-places at Kuusalu and Kiuu.

## Visit Lahemaa recommends visiting:

- \* Pikakose house museum with interesting cultural history at Vanaküla;
- \* Valgejõe Winery to taste local berry wine and take part in a program;
- \* Kõnnu Distillery Art Gallery and taking part in a painting workshop;
- \* Toomani farm museum at Muuksi;
- \* Lahemaa heritage house at Uuri and taking part in a program or workshop;
- \* Kolgaküla, Leona, Muuksi or Ulearu stables and going horseback riding in Lahemaa.

**Villages:** Nõmmeveski, Parksi, Murksi, Vanaküla, Valgejõe, Kõnnu, Kemba, Kalme, Kolgaküla, Kotka,

## The multicultural Pärissaar peninsula

The northernmost peninsula of Estonia – Pärissaar – has been influenced by its neighbouring cultures. Legend has it that Viinistu was established by the Finns and Pärissaar (the oldest seaside village in Estonia) was once a fearsome Swedish-speaking pirate stronghold. All five villages have been affected by the town of Loksas where representatives of 30 nations live. The peninsula offers a great experience for those interested in wildlife, art and military heritage.

### Did you know that:

- \* For centuries, people in the area earned their living with fishing and sea trade. In the 1920s, smuggling of spirits to Finland made villages flourish.
- \* Thanks to the building of the brick-factory, the port and numerous summerhouses, a small village of Loksas became a well-known resort in the beginning of the 20th century.
- \* After World War 2, several thousand men and their families from all parts of the Soviet Union were moved to the area to work in the shipyard and the navy-base.

**Villages:** Suurpea, Pärissaar, Viinistu, Turbuneeme, Kasispea

**Approximate number of inhabitants:** 500, in Loksas: 2500

**Accommodation:** Kuivoja holiday centre at Loksas, Kärika holiday house at Suurpea; Kelluka, Dharmaa and Tooma holiday houses at Pärissaar, Viinistu Art Hotell, Tammispea holiday village.

**Camping:** RMK Purekkari campsite

**Catering:** Lucky and Mere bar, shops at Loksas; Viinistu restaurant

**Beach:** Loksas

## Visit Lahemaa recommends visiting:

- \* The northernmost tip of the Estonian mainland – Purekkari, birdwatching tower at Vihasoo, coastal natural heritage study trails, big rocks and Mohni island.
- \* Viinistu art museum with the biggest private Estonian art collection and Viinistu village museum to learn the details of everyday coastal life.
- \* The town of Loksas with a beautiful sandy beach and two nice churches.

## Palmse manor – the heart of the national park – and surroundings

Palmse has been the centre of Lahemaa National Park for decades. In the information centre you can find materials, see an exhibition and a slideshow about Lahemaa. The manor was renovated by the national park administration in the 1970s & 1980s and is now one of the most remarkable examples of a baroque complex with a lovely forest park. On the alvars north-west to Palmse you can find the oldest traces of human settlements in Lahemaa.

### Did you know that:

- \* On the road from Palmse to Sagadi, there is Prehistoric art centre where you can see an exciting exhibition of the copies of 6000 years old cave drawings from Lake Onega.
- \* In Palmse manor, you can take part in different events and programs.
- \* There is much to investigate in Palmse for those who are interested in stones - Kloostrikivi (Nunnery boulders) in the manor park, Näljakangrud (Hunger stones) and Vahakivi (a sacrificial stone) a bit further. On the road from Palmse to Vihasoo you can still find old verst stones, one of them is called Hunkivi (Wolf stone).
- \* Baron Carl Magnus von der Pahlen was a caring master. Already in the middle of the 19th century, some of his peasants got modern limestone houses

with chimneys. A few of these still exist.

**Villages:** Metsanurga, Võsupere, Palmse, Muuke, Uusküla, Ilumäe, Võhma, Tõugu, Vätku, Joandu, Aasumetsa, Joaveski.

**Approximate number of inhabitants:** 360

**Accommodation:** RMK Ojaäärse nature house at Võsupere, accommodation and caravan park Lahemaa Kohvikann, Palmse manor guesthouses, Joaveski community house, Arbavele leisure centre.

**Catering:** tavern and restaurant, Lahemaa Kohvikann, several eating-places at Viitna.

## Visit Lahemaa recommends:

- \* Visiting the exhibition of cave drawings at Võsupere.
- \* Taking time to pass along the road from Palmse to Vihasoo and admiring the linden parkway, ancient landscapes, alvars with junipers, cosy farm architecture and sights like the chapel of Ilumäe, Kotkemäe monument, the community house and a nostalgic shop in Võhma and several archaeological sites.
- \* Making a stop at Joaveski where are situated the ruins of a cardboard factory, a cascade and a suspension bridge over River Loobu.

## The captains` Käsma peninsula

There is only one village on the Käsma peninsula and it is known as the sea captains` village. In 1884-1931 it was home to a maritime school, and virtually every family had its captain or coxswain. Käsma is also known for a summer resort for scientists, artists and writers and a popular place for hosting events.

### Did you know that:

- \* Towards the end of the 19th century ship-building commenced here and Käsma bay became one of the most important winter ports for ships in Northern Estonia.
- \* There are two chapels in Käsma. The wooden chapel was erected with the donations from the villagers. It is surrounded with a nice cemetery. The stone chapel was built to honour general Nikolai von Dellingshausen who discovered Käsma as a summer resort.
- \* As is traditional in coastal villages, the houses are situated tightly in a row on the sides of the main street. Typical of Käsma are white houses and high flag posts.
- \* Käsma boasts the largest concentration of erratics in

Europe and possibly the biggest field of boulders in the world.

**Village:** Käsma

**Approximate number of inhabitants:** 150

**Accommodation:** There are numerous holiday houses and Lainela Holiday village in Käsma

**Catering:** Kaspervik restaurant, Prunni ait bar, Käsma shop

## Visit Lahemaa recommends:

- \* Visiting Käsma maritime museum in the former border guard station building and learn the history of the village. You can book a sea voyage with a viking ship Aimar. Behind the museum there is a small lighthouse.
- \* Taking a walk through the village up to the Vana-Jüri rocks.
- \* Exploring this beautiful peninsula's countryside on a 14 km long hiking and cycling trail and learning about the colourful nature of the 1500-year-old Käsma lake and peninsula.

## Spectacular Vihula and Sagadi manors and surroundings

Lahemaa is known for its four manors. Near the highest part of the North Estonian Klint, 67 m above the sea level you can visit two magnificently renovated manor estates – Sagadi and Vihula. Both of them offer a lot of activities. Besides that, you should also visit Oandu and Vainupea.

### Did you know that:

- \* Sagadi has always been admired for its exemplary forestry system and now belongs to the State Forest Management Agency, houses a forest and a manor museum, a nature school, a hotel and a restaurant that pays much attention to local ingredients.
- \* Renovated Vihula manor has a dashing restaurant and a luxurious spa-hotel. With all the facilities – an eco-farm, playgrounds, sportsgrounds, mills etc., and events like concerts, you can spend many days here enjoying yourself.
- \* Oandu is the hiking trail centre - seven hiking or study trails start here. At the visitor centre the local wildlife and a range of nature recreation possibilities are introduced, as well as exhibits on the production and use of forest and timber throughout the ages.

**Villages:** Koljaku, Kakuvälja, Sagadi, Tepelvälja, Oandu, Lauuli, Vihula, Mustoja, Haili, Pajuveski, Karula, Vainupea

**Approximate number of inhabitants:** 400

**Accommodation:** Allika, Ligidama holiday houses and Sae hostel at Koljaku; Oanduia and Haaviku holiday houses at Oandu; Sagadi manor hotel and hostel; Vihula manor hotel; Vainupea holiday house ja Adami farm at Vainupea

**Camping:** RMK Oandu campsite, RMK Mustoja campfire site

**Catering:** Sagadi manor restaurant, Vihula manor restaurant and pub

## Visit Lahemaa recommends visiting:

- \* Esku chapel and cemetery;
- \* Kakuvälja handicraft farm where you can admire and buy local handicraft and yarn, as well as have a cup of tea or coffee;
- \* Vainupea, the easternmost village of Lahemaa where the active village association takes good care of its lovely sights – a chapel, a graveyard, a beach and a light beacon. Kaarnakivi (Raven rock) that is connected with many legends is also worth seeing.

## The holidaymakers` Vergi peninsula

The settlements of the Vergi peninsula are located near the coast. They used to be fishermen villages but are now mostly summer resorts. You can find beautiful coastal wildlife, fields of boulders and islets but also military ruins in the area. The centre of the peninsula is covered with forest. The biggest and most popular settlement in the area is Võsu, which is a well-known resort. The population of the peninsula grows many times bigger in summer.

### Did you know that:

- \* Võsu was discovered as a good summer resort with its pine forests, beautiful sandy beach and relatively warm seawater by Russian holidaymakers in the 1870s. During the Soviet period Võsu became the biggest holiday destination in Estonia.
- \* In the 18th and 19th century, Vergi was a fish trade centre with Finland.
- \* Altja has been renovated by Lahemaa National Park as a traditional fishermen`s village with typical farmhouses, fishing net sheds, a swing and a tavern.

**Villages:** Lobi, Lahe, Koolimäe, Natturi, Pedassaare, Pihlaspea, Vergi, Altja

**Approximate number of inhabitants:** 190, in Võsu: 440

**Accommodation:** There are several holiday houses in and around Võsu and at Vergi, Toomarahva farmstay at Altja

**Camping:** RMK Võsu campsite, Lepispea caravan park, Võsu Veranda tenting

**Catering:** There are numerous places to eat in Võsu, restaurant Wirkes at Vergi and a tavern at Altja

## Visit Lahemaa recommends:

- \* Taking a walk on the beach and in the streets of Võsu to enjoy nature and architecture.
- \* Visiting a small museum at Lobi.
- \* Taking a walk on Ojakivi hiking trail (5 km) or Altja nature and cultural heritage trail (3 km).
- \* Visiting the local harbour at Võsu or Vergi.

## Routes on the Lahemaa Ring

To make it easier for you to go around the Lahemaa Ring, we have created model routes according to the length of your stay.

### 1 day on the Lahemaa Ring:

1. Viru bog study trail (3,5 or 6 km) and observation tower;
2. Hara harbour and military heritage;
3. Võsu village, beach and harbour;
4. Altja fishing village and tavern;
5. Palmse manor.

### 2-4 days on the Lahemaa Ring:

1. Viru bog study trail (3,5 or 6 km) and observation tower;
2. Kolga manor;
3. Leesi village, community shop and church;
4. Hara harbour and military heritage;
5. Cape Purekkari – the northernmost tip of Estonian mainland;
6. Viinistu village, art museum and harbour;
7. Jaani-Tooma rock in Kasispea;
8. Käsma captains` village and maritime museum;
9. Võsu village, beach and harbour;
10. Altja fishing village and tavern;
11. Oandu visitor centre and hiking trails;
12. Sagadi, Palmse, Vihula manor.

### 5-7 days on the Lahemaa Ring:

If you have a chance to spend 5-7 days in Lahemaa, enjoy peacefully all the villages and spend a day in each region.