

Finland: Archipelago Island Hopping

Tour code: CFI

Revised: Oct 05

The Turku Archipelago is one of Finland's most stunning natural phenomena – 20,000 islands stretching out into the sea from the city of Turku in the southwest part of the country. The Archipelago Ring route: several bridges, 9 ferries or connection vessels will take you from one island to another amidst unique archipelago nature. Our circular route starts in Turku, Finland's oldest city, established in 1229 (775 years old in 2004), where you will enjoy a ride around the historic city with its medieval castle, cathedral and riverside paths. Stay in the picturesque old harbour village of Naantali, home of the Moomin characters. Enjoy the unique pleasure of hopping between the small islands off Finland's southwest coast and the pleasure of seeing the islands from the sea as well as the road. You will reach the heart of the archipelago arriving on the Island of Inio, Houtskar (the only Swedish speaking island), Korpoo and Nauvo, where there are 3000 islands and skerries in Nauvo's unique archipelago. NOTE: You will not stay in Parainen. From Nauvo you go by ferry to Rymattylka and from there you cycle via Naantali to Turku.

Departures on the following Saturdays in 2006:

June 10, 17 & 24.

July 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29.

August 5

Level of Difficulty - Easy to Moderate. You should be able to cycle between 15 km and 60km per day. It is generally easy, but with occasional rolling sections, and 3 days 50km+.

The Bikes - On Day 2 collect your bikes from the shop, which is very close to the hotel.

Bicycle and helmet are included in the price with repair kit, panniers, and 24 hour emergency service.

You will be asked to give a credit card imprint or 200 euros in cash at the time of renting the bikes, as a guarantee, which you will receive back on return of the bikes.

The bikes are 21-gear trekking/ hybrid bikes. 7 gear bikes are also available.

Please let us know your height and inside leg measurements so that we can request your bikes before your arrival.

Baggage Transfers - Each day that you move on to new accommodation during the tour your baggage (normally up to 20kg / 44 pounds per person) will be transferred to await your arrival at the next night's accommodation.

Maps & Route Notes - We provide specially written route descriptions for each day's cycling, together with maps.

Accommodation & Meals - Accommodation is in small hotels and guesthouses including a manor house and former barn converted into a guesthouse. Dinner, Bed and breakfasts on 2 nights, remaining nights are bed and breakfast. Picnic lunches are not included, but materials for picnics can be purchased in each of the towns and villages where you stay.

Nights 1 and 7: Turku. Our 3 star cosy hotel is centrally located in Turku. (131 rooms). It is located within walking distance (approx 500m) from the railway station. Bed and breakfast accommodation. For dinner you will find a large selection of restaurants in the centre of Turku. The hotel has a restaurant and 3 saunas. Morning sauna is included in the room price.

Nights 2 & 3: Kustavi. Overnight in a formal residence of archipelago sea pilots who would guide ships through hazardous rocky waters to the harbour. Guesthouse is located right by the harbour with great views of the sea. There are 6 twin rooms, 2 single rooms and a suite, all with private facilities. All rooms have a sea view. There is a café where the breakfast is served and a lounge with TV.

Dinner included on the first night only. To be paid directly on your second night there.

Night 4 & 5: Nauvo. Overnight in a former barn converted into a guesthouse located amongst a beautiful natural area near the sea. All the 3 guest rooms have a phone and private facilities. **Dinner included.**

Night 6: Naantali. The guesthouse is located in the Old Town of Naantali. Cosy and personal rooms

with private facilities. Bed and Breakfast accommodation.

Dinner available nearby in the restaurant of your choice.

Arrival - Once you arrive at the airport in Helsinki, take the bus to the city terminal at the train station (Allow 4.90 Euros per person), duration 30 minutes.

Train to Turku. The journey takes 2 hours and the price is not included in the tour. (Allow 15 pounds, around 23 Euros).

From the train station in Turku, bus 32 or 42 will take you to the hotel. Departures, every 15 minutes (cost is approx 1.80 Euros).

From the train station in Turku, short walk to the hotel.

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Day 1. Turku

Arrive Turku. (via Helsinki & train to Turku).

Day 2. Turku – Kustavi (65km)

Pick up your bike from close to the hotel continue by bike to the nearby town of Naantali, an idyllic seaside village with cobbled streets and old wooden houses around a bustling harbour. Naantali is a beautiful holiday town with its long tradition as a spa resort. Its special character stems from the history and the charm of the sea and the archipelago. Soon after Naantali the island hopping begins, first with a stunning ride across the bridge to Merimasku and then take a break from peddling with a relaxing 45-minute ferry journey. Continue on by bike to your overnight accommodation.

Day 3. Kustavi. Rest day or circular ride on Kustavi. Take time to visit the old wooden church, the caves and Kustavi Museum.

Day 4. Kustavi – Inio – Houtskar – Korppoo – Nauvo – (60km). Seven ferry journeys today as the real heart of the archipelago is reached. First a 25 minutes ferry trip to Inio Island (constant connection). Sights in Inio island: The church of Sophia Wilhemina and nature trail of Norrby, which goes on top of the hill Kasberget – great view over the archipelago!! Then by ferry Inio Island to Houtskar Island (one departure in every 2 hours, week-ends more seldom, duration 1 hour). Sights in Houtskar: observation tower of Borgber, lookout spot of Trollberg, the church of Sangta Maria. On Houtskar Island there are two very short ferry rides on the island itself (in Bjorko and in Kivimo, constant ferry connection) which has some of the region's most challenging cycling, but you can rest on the half hour ferry ride Houtskar Island, Korppoo Island (one departure every hour, duration 30

minutes). Sights in Korppoo Island are the Korpo grey stone church from 14th century and Korppoo gard – the centre of Korppoo from early 19th century with unique architectural style. From Korppoo it is a short hop to Nauvo, (several departure every hour, duration 5 minutes) where you overnight. Sights in Nauvo; the medieval grey stone church and the Gyttja district museum.

Day 5. Nauvo Island. Spending a second night on Nauvo island there are several choices of circular cycling routes, plus the possibility to go canoeing or take a traditional seaside sauna.

Day 6. Nauvo – Rymattyla – Naantali – (40km). Take the ferry from Nauvo harbour back to the mainland and continue by bike via Rymattyla. Rymattyla has 400 islands in the municipality. Cycle further to the Rymattyla village centre. Visit St Jacobs church, several handicraft shops and even buy directly from the farmers. From Rymattyla you cycle back to Naantali.

Day 7. Naantali – Turku - (14km). Short ride back to Turku and then enjoy a ride around the historic city.

Day 8. End of tour.

End of Tour - Tour ends on day 8 after breakfast in Turku. Train from Turku to Helsinki.

Bus from the rail station to the airport.

Extend your stay - Extra nights anywhere along the cycling tour route can be pre-booked including Helsinki. Details and prices on request.

Included - 7 nights, in small hotels and guesthouses. 2 dinners are included. Hire of bikes is also included in the tour price, with helmet, repair kit, panniers and 24-hour emergency service. Maps and route notes.

There are actually 3 kinds of ferries. Most of the ferry trips are by small yellow ferryboats (lossi in Finnish) or by slightly ones (lautta in Finnish) and are free. Three of the trips are by bigger white vessels and they charge a small fee for the trip. This is however included in the package.

Not Included - Sightseeing and entrance fees, lunches and all but 2 evening meals, expenses due to bike problems, road or bad weather conditions, use of bus and taxi, repairs