



Riiklik
Looduskaitsekeskus



Hiking trails of
NAISSAAR
Nature Park

Lighthouse





HIKING TRAILS OF NAISSAAR NATURE PARK

Naissaar Island is located in the Gulf of Finland, about 8 km from Tallinn. The island is approximately 9 km long, 4 km wide in its widest part and 18.6 km² in area. The island was first mentioned under the name of *Terra Feminarum* in the XI century by monk Adam of Bremen. It is also known to have appeared under the names of Nargheten (1297), Nargön (1509), Nargen (1519) a.o. The name Naissaar first appears in written records in 1732. Naissaar Nature Park was established in 1995 and encompasses the entire island. Eighty five per cent of the island is presently covered with forest. Naissaar has always been an important navigation landmark. Felling was prohibited on the island already in the 13th century: felling on Naissaar and three other islands in the vicinity of Tallinn was prohibited by an order of Danish king Erik IV Menved in 1297. This year can also be regarded as the start of nature conservation in Estonia.

Due to its strategic location, the island has for centuries been a focus of military attention, which is borne witness by numerous military structures and their ruins on the island. During the Soviet period (in 1944–1994), the island was closed for civilians.

A total of 464 fungus species, 204 lichen species, 149 bryophyte species and 516 vascular plant species have been recorded on the island. Amphibians and reptiles are represented by the Common Frog, Adder and Grass Snake. Birds of 162 species have been recorded on Naissaar and in the surrounding coastal sea area, with 97 of them being likely nesters. Mammals are represented on the island by bats, the European Hedgehog, Common Shrew, Red Squirrel, Pine Marten, Brown Rat, House Mouse, Bank Vole, Red Fox, Brown Hare, Wild Boar and Roe Deer. Also the Elk has occasionally persisted on the island.

Three hiking trails have been marked to introduce visitors to the nature values and cultural heritage of the island: the Military Trail – 10 km, the Central Trail – 11 km, and the Southern Trail – 13 km.



MILITARY TRAIL (NORTHERN TRAIL)

1. Casino

Haldja (formerly Aldia) Village (popularly also known as Casino Village) was established during World War I and got its name after the officers' casino or Commandant's quarters of Naissaar. The building burned down during World War I and was restored in 1924. The time of construction and the initial purpose of the building are not known. During the Soviet period, the building was used as an army barrack and staff quarters.

2. Savikallas ('Clay Coast')

An over seven-metre-high coastal escarpment exposing bluish loam mostly covered with scree.

3. Estonian battery No. 5

The battery was built in 1919 to cover the firing sector between Naissaar and Aegna.

4. Rocket base

The rocket base, established in 1963, was equipped with the then best technology, which required particularly strict defence.

5. Virbi (Virbu) ots ('Virbi (Virbu) Tip')

The northern tip of Naissaar accommodating a 45-metre-high octagonal lighthouse erected in 1960.

6. Battery No. 9

A monolithic concrete structure which had an ammunition shelter at both ends, each topped with an armoured turret equipped with two eight-inch guns.

7. Battery No. 10A or Battery of Peter the Great

Two strong two-storey armoured turret emplacements, originally connected by a 200-metre sand embankment. Only the northern one of the concrete structures could be completed and mounted with a revolving armoured turret. The southern structure remained only partly completed.

8. Battery No. 10B

The largest revolving gun emplacement in Naissaar. The gun barrel was 14 metres long. The battery consisted of two large concrete structures, which were connected by a tunnel running under a sand embankment, and a command station towering between them. The command station with its three storeys and 15 metres of height was the tallest defence structure of the Naval Fortress of Peter the Great.

9. Coastal defence battery of the Soviet Army

The battery was built after World War II. Most of the structures were located underground and only the gun emplacements and machine gun bunkers are visible above ground. The battery lost its importance after the completion of the rocket base.

10. Kunila Hill

A sand dune with a measured altitude of 27–29.5 metres.

The highest point of Naissaar. Also known as Danish King's Hill or King's Garden Hill. See also Central Trail, point 4.

Kunila Pine – A nearly 300-year-old pine, the oldest tree of Naissaar.



CENTRAL TRAIL

1. Pine dunes

A narrow belt of dunes covered with pine heath with a rich lichen layer. Bryophytes are dominated by Wideleaf Racomitrium Moss and lichens by cup and reindeer lichens.

2. Danish King's Garden, later name Lehtmetsa

A boreo-nemoral forest of uneven density, formerly used as a hay meadow and a venue for village parties. Stands out among the island's forests in its rich undergrowth. In the south of the forest there is the protected Lehtmetsa Erratic Boulder (10.3 x 7.4 x 3.3 m, P = 30.8 m). According to one of the legends associated with the name of the Danish King's Garden, the Danish king sent his daughter to live on the island due to her bad ways.

3. Põhjaküla or Tagaküla ('Northern or Back Village')

The buildings of this east-coast village were no longer in place by the time of departure of Soviet troops. Two farms have been restored by now and sheep are raised in one of them. A stunted self-sown cherry grove grows at one of the farm sites.

4. Kunila Hill

The tall pine forest that once grew on Kunila Hill used to be an important navigation landmark. It was forbidden at that time to alter the silhouettes of the coast and the islands. This was also the reason behind the ban on felling in many coastal forests. The wish to preserve the forest at Kunila was certainly one of the reasons why a full ban was imposed on felling on the island in 1297. The tall pine forest on Kunila Hill was burned down in the course of the Crimean War in 1854. The hill is now covered with low-growth pine heath. See also Military Trail, point 10.

5. Kunila Mire

One of the more than thirty patches of mire on Naissaar. The mires on the island have developed for nearly 5000 years, being the northernmost ones in Estonia. Transitional mires with an up to two-metre-thick peat layer dominate.

6. Dry boreal forest

Approx. 85% of the area of Naissaar is covered with forest, with dry boreal pine forests with sparse undergrowth being the prevailing type of forest. Typical species include cowberry, bilberry, heather, etc. In places, the ground is covered with a continuous moss carpet.

7. The Big Hills

The up to 27-metre-high sand dunes located in the central part of the island are known as the Big Hills. Their shape was altered in the course of building the Naval Fortress of Peter the Great, when the so-called Battery of Heir Alexei was planned to be built here. At the southern dune, there are stacks of rectangular stone blocks stacked by war prisoners and additional labour from Pskov for the purposes of building the battery.

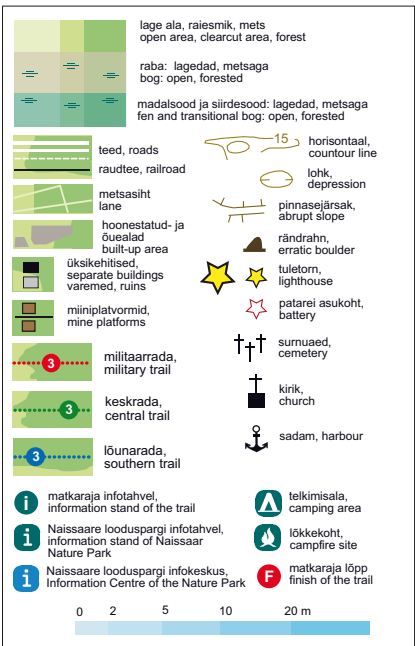
8. Põlendikukivi ('Burntwood Boulder')

A protected rapakivi erratic boulder (9.8 x 6.7 x 6.0 m; P = 26.7 m). The name dates from the time of the Crimean War, when the surrounding forest was on fire and cracks formed in the boulder due to the heat.

9. Mine stores

Mine stores encompass nearly 20 ha and are surrounded with a multiple wire fence. The stores were established in the 1950s by the Soviet Army for the purposes of assembling and storage of sea mines. The railway system was reconstructed, a fire depot established, etc. in order to service the mine stores.







SOUTHERN TRAIL

1. Noodamajarand ('Seine Shed Coast')

The marine abrasion processes eroding the coastal escarpment are observable along the coast at Noodamajarand. Seine net fishing was practiced here until the 1890s. Seine net cooperatives had been set up for each four households and each cooperative had its own seine shed. The seine sheds that gave the coast its name are no longer in place.

2. Hülkari or Hülgekari ('Seal Headland')

The sea and the wind heap up new sand into coastal ridges and the sand is gradually fixed by vegetation. Hülkari used to be the best place for seal hunting. A small cemetery for French sailors perished of scurvy was established behind the sand-duned coastal ridges during the Crimean War. The best beaches of Naissaar are located at Hülkari.



3. Estonian Battery No. 4

The battery was initially designed in 1911 as a temporary one but reconstructed into a permanent battery, carrying the number 5. It was partly blasted in 1918 and restored during the period of the Republic of Estonia under the name of Estonian Battery No. 4. The battery was blasted again in 1941. The site has become overgrown with brush and forest.

4. Männiku Village

The village was formed in the 1950s as a typical barrack village of the Soviet Army. It is connected with the harbour by a narrow-gauge railway. The railway was once 37.7 km long. The village is also the location of one of the big erratic boulders of the island – Männiku Boulder.

5. Lõunaküla or Suurküla ('Southern or Large Village')

Formerly the largest and most important mixed Swedish-Estonian village on the island. The most important facility of the village – Külasadam ('Village Harbour') – was located in a cove between Vallikari (Swed. *Vallkarel*) and Kiinikari (Swed. *Kinkarel*) headlands.

6. Tähtkants ('Star Fort') on Vallimägi Fort Hill

A star-shaped earthen fort (Ger. *Sternchanze*) with embankments, moats and ravelines, built on top of an old small Swedish fort. The fort was planned by Peter the Great but completed only after his death. It also included a pier known as Kantsisild ('Fort Pier').



7. Cemetery

Although the site's earlier name Kapelle (Ger. 'Chapel') refers to an ancient coastal chapel, it is presently just a small cemetery sheltered by old pines. The most significant cultural monument here is a tombstone in memory of British sailors who perished in the Crimean War (1854–1855). The tombstone was erected in 1927 and renovated in 2000.

8. Daughter church of the Swedish St. Michael's Congregation

An earlier St. Mary's Church, similar to the present church in its shape, had its cornerstone laid on Lady Day in 1853. The church was completed already in 1856 but destroyed in World War I. The cornerstone of the present church was laid in 1934 and the church was inaugurated in 1938. Restoration of the church started in 1998.

9. Sepa Farm at Lõunaküla

This is the place of birth of the world famous optician and telescope builder academician Bernhard Woldemar Schmidt (1879), who cut high precision lenses with just his left hand, having lost the right hand in an accident. The farm presently belongs to conductor Tõnu Kaljuste, who started to organise concerts in the newly built Omari Barn in 2006.

10. Laanekuusiku ('Sprucewood')

A protected typical uneven-aged boreal spruce forest.

11. Mine stores

See Central Trail, point 9.

12. Site of summerhouses at Sinksaare

The development of a recreation village started in the pine dune forest at Sinksaare at the end of the 19th century. Nineteen summerhouse plots were allotted and the first villas were built. A small harbour was constructed. Erratic boulders known as the Kaevandkivid are visible in the sea.



Clay Coast

IT IS PERMITTED IN THE PROTECTED AREA TO:

- pick berries and mushrooms in the entire territory of the protected area;
- camp and make a fire in specially prepared and marked places, except in yard areas. Camping and fire-making is allowed in yard areas with the permission of the owner;
- organise public events in non-designated places only with the permission of the administrative authority of the protected area;
- hunt for the purposes of regulating the numbers of game.



Burntwood Boulder

IT IS PROHIBITED IN THE PROTECTED AREA TO:

- ride a bicycle off roads and trails and drive and park a motor vehicle off designated roads and parking areas.

Naissaar



Administrative authority:

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**To report a conservation or
environmental violation,
please call 1313**

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