

Rovaniemi, the Official Hometown of Santa Claus®



International Media Kit

2020

Visit Rovaniemi

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1. Welcome to Rovaniemi, the Official Hometown of Santa Claus®



Rovaniemi, the hometown of Santa Claus, is situated on the Arctic Circle at the heart of the Barents region, in Finnish Lapland. Known as the capital of Finnish Lapland, Rovaniemi offers a unique combination of peaceful nature, Nordic culture and urban activity.

Lapland's eight seasons and rich cultural heritage create an excellent framework for versatile tourism services. Rovaniemi is one of Finland's main destinations for foreign travelers; in numbers of overnight stays by international visitors, it ranks third after Helsinki and Vantaa.

A great variety of annual events, ranging from the Arctic Lapland Rally and the Arctic Design Week to the Santa Claus' departure celebrations (titled Santa is on his way after a popular Finnish Christmas carol), attract visitors and media from all over the world to Rovaniemi.



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2. Key Facts and Figures

Rovaniemi is the provincial centre of Lapland, situated at the meeting point of the rivers Kemi and Ounas, on the Arctic Circle. A university town and a popular destination for tourists, Rovaniemi is the commercial, administrative, educational, cultural and sports centre of the region.

- The number of citizens is 63 000.
- In terms of geographic area, Rovaniemi is the largest town in Europe, spanning 8017 km² in all.
- This total area comprises 7601 km² of land and 415 km² of water.
- The total number of overnight stays was 638 000 in 2018.
- Second most international town in Finland according to visitors.
- Rovaniemi is Finland's 16th largest town.
- The town is surrounded by approximately 30 villages, most of them situated near the rivers Ounas and Kemi.
- Rovaniemi has been the administrative centre of Lapland since 1938.
- Rovaniemi was granted town status in 1960.
- 30,704 households
- Over 500 000 visits at the Santa Claus Village per year.
- Most of international visitors in 2019 came from China (44 000 overnight stays, including Hong Kong), France (41 200), United Kingdom (37 600), Spain (25 900) and Italy (21 300).

www.visitrovaniemi.fi/wp-content/uploads/Rovaniemi-tourism-statistics-December-2019.pdf

Further information:

City of Rovaniemi, Facts, <http://international.rovaniemi.fi/en/Services/About-Us/General-information>

Regional Council of Lapland, Statistics, <http://www.lappi.fi/lapinliitto/en/statistics>

Statistics Finland, http://tilastokeskus.fi/index_en.html



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3. Rovaniemi Highlights

a. Being Able to Meet Santa Claus Every Day of the Year



Santa Claus has lived in Finnish Lapland longer than even he can remember. His original home is on Korvatunturi, a fell, where many of Christmas' greatest secrets still lie hidden.

In 1927, a good friend of Santa, known as Uncle Markus, accidentally revealed the whereabouts of Santa's home and curious searchers began to follow his trail. Of course, they failed to find the home of Santa Claus, which is one of

the world's closest guarded secrets. However, Santa didn't want to disappoint his friends. Accordingly, half a century later, he welcomed them for the first time to Rovaniemi at the Arctic Circle. He could not have chosen a better place. As well as being the home of Santa's magical world, the Arctic Circle also acts as a gateway to a slower-paced, enchanted time.

As the number of guests grew year by year, Santa finally made an historic promise: Rovaniemi would become his official hometown, a meeting place for all friends of Christmas, and Santa himself would be available to meet them on every day of the year.

As the Official Hometown of Santa Claus^(R), Rovaniemi is one of the very few places on Earth where Christmas can be experienced all year round. Every day, Santa welcomes visitors from all over the world at the Santa Claus Village, 8 km north from the centre of Rovaniemi.

Letters from around the globe are on display at Santa Claus' Main Post Office, where visitors can order letters from Santa and send their own holiday greetings, stamped with a special postmark. Its official address is: Santa Claus' Main Post office, Santa Claus Village Rovaniemi, Tähtikuja 1, 96930 Arctic Circle, Finland. The post office is open every day of the year.



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b. Crossing over or under the Arctic Circle

Rovaniemi is situated directly on the Arctic Circle. This latitude marks the southern boundary of the Arctic region. The current latitude of the Arctic Circle is approximately 66.5°N, but it moves north at an annual rate of ca. 15 m. While there are several countries in the Arctic Circle, only Finland has a major city at this latitude – Rovaniemi, whose airport's main runway bisects this invisible line. Crossing the Arctic Circle has become a highly popular initiation ritual for travelers. Santa Park in Rovaniemi is the only place in the world to undercross the magical Arctic Circle.

Further information:

Santa Park: <https://santaparkarcticworld.com/santapark/en/santapark>

c. Roosevelt Cabin i.e. Arctic Circle Cabin



In the Roosevelt Cabin you can find an exhibition related to the history of tourism at the Arctic Circle.

Rovaniemi and Lapland were the first recipients of aid provided by UNICEF's predecessor UNRRA in post-war Finland. The aid provided by UNICEF also included the construction of the Arctic Circle Cabin

and the commencement of tourist services. Known as the "soul" of UNRRA, Eleanor Roosevelt made a surprise visit to Rovaniemi in 1950. The Arctic Circle Cabin was constructed in just two weeks for the reception ceremony.

When Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, the widow of the former President of the United States, famous for her humanitarianism, paid a surprise visit to Rovaniemi in 1950 to see Lapland and the post-war reconstruction of the city, her host, the Governor of the county, Uuno Hannula had the difficult task of organizing the program. Hannula was helped by the local mayor, Lauri Kaijalainen, who, with his assistants, found a suitable piece of land bordering the north-bound Highway 4 on which to build a cabin. The land was

donated by Eemeli Karinen and it was here, at the Arctic Circle, that the welcoming ceremony was to take place.

On Sunday, June 11th, 1950, the cabin was ready to receive its distinguished visitor. Many of the inhabitants of Rovaniemi who took part in the welcoming ceremony have since grown accustomed to seeing distinguished visitors from all parts of the world. The event, was, however, important as far as local tourism was concerned since it marked the first effort to attract a growing number of visitors to stop and enjoy a refreshing coffee-break, buy souvenirs and send the inevitable postcard home bearing the special Arctic Circle postmark. The cabin, which was open during the summer months, collected thousands of names in its visitors' book every year. In June 2020 Roosevelt Cabin is celebrating its 70th birthday.

Further information:

<https://santaclausvillage.info/info/history-of-santa-claus-village-rovaniemi/>

d. Experiencing the Eight Seasons in the Rhythm of Nature



According to Lapp and Sámi tradition, the year contains eight seasons rather than four. A simple division into spring, summer, autumn and winter would not do the annual cycle justice in the far North, where seasons of transition – spring-winter, summer-spring, autumn-summer and winter-autumn, so to speak – have their own distinct characters.

The eight seasons of the North make Rovaniemi an ideal place for cherishing the nightless nights of summer and the unique twilight of winter. On clear nights, the midnight sun is visible in Rovaniemi from 6 June to 7 July. The first snowfalls usually occur in October.

Rovaniemi and its surroundings offer a wealth of outdoor experiences. In the North, nature plays an important part in people's everyday lives. For many locals sport and so-called functional exercise, such as berry-picking and mushrooming, are favourite pastimes. There are many nature trails in the vicinity of Rovaniemi.



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e. Joining One of the Great Events



Rovaniemi offers plenty of entertainment, including several international events around the year. Examples include Arctic Lapland Rally, Arctic Design Week, the Grand Christmas Opening and Santa is on his way.

Further information:

The event calendar of Visit Rovaniemi,
www.visitrovaniemi.fi

f. Getting Sporty in Ounasvaara



Rovaniemi boasts a versatile sports culture. The town's 380 sports facilities range from skating rinks to swimming halls and snowmobile routes. The total number of sports clubs is over 200.

Ounasvaara is Rovaniemi's green oasis – or white in winter, when the hill becomes a resort for skiers and snowboarders.

Sports institute Santasport at Ounasvaara offers first-class training in a wide range of sports. Its facilities and services include an ice hall, indoor fields for football and athletics, well-equipped gyms and a cross-country skiing track supplemented with artificial snow as well as a spa, a sports club, a bowling alley, the Funpark for kids and accommodation.

g. Enjoying the Cultural Scene of Rovaniemi



Creativity is one of Rovaniemi's key values. Rovaniemi offers a range of cultural and experience services, a flourishing tourist sector and high-quality art education, from workshops to university courses. The region is home



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to a host of firms in the creative sector, which engage in content production, advertising and communications, the film industry and industrial art and design.

Music and Art at Korundi House of Culture

Korundi House of Culture has a fascinating history. This building is one of the few in Rovaniemi that survived the Second World War. Built in 1933, the premises saw long service as a depot for postal vehicles. After the war, an extension was added to the depot, using bricks salvaged from the ruins strewn across the city. In 2009 and 2010, a new round of extension and renovation work was performed, headed by local architect studio Juhani Pallasmaa.

Two art organizations of Finnish and international interest and importance lie at the core of activities at the Korundi House of Culture: The Chamber Orchestra of Lapland and the **Rovaniemi Art Museum**. The museum's Jenny & Antti Wihuri Foundation Collection is one of Finland's finest collections of modern art. The museum's key exhibition theme is the Nordic perspective and the Arctic regions. Temporary exhibitions focus on international and local phenomena, based on a wide variety of visual artwork.

The Chamber Orchestra of Lapland is the most northerly professional orchestra in Finland and the European Union. It has 18 players and conductor John Storgårds has been its Artistic Director since autumn 1996. The orchestra frequently gives Finland's first performances of works by international composers and has premièred pieces by a number of leading composers.

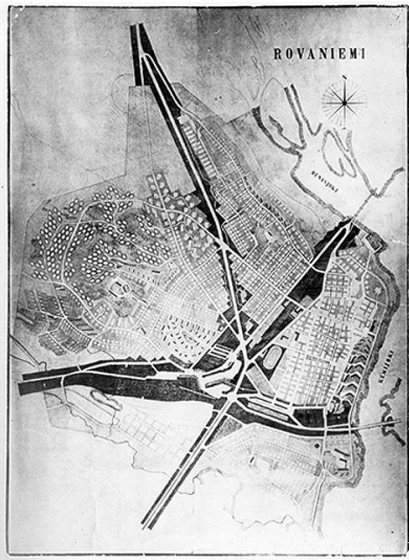
The Arktikum Museum and Arctic Science Centre



Arktikum was opened to the public in 1992, during Finland's 75th Independence Day celebrations. The building was designed by the Danish architecture group Birch-Bonderup & Thorup-Waade. Designed by Bonderup and Lehtipalo, the crescent-shaped new annex was completed in autumn 1997. The museum's most striking feature, its glass corridor, is 172 meters long. This tube serves as the "Gateway to the North".

The Provincial Museum of Lapland's permanent exhibition, Northern Ways, introduces visitors to the story of how people and nature have prevailed in the North. Taking visitors on a tour through history from ancient times to the present day, the exhibition gives a rich account of the causes and effects of local cultural development. The **Arctic Centre's** main exhibition, the Arctic in Change, is an interactive introduction to the cultures, living conditions and natural life of the northern region. Temporary exhibitions at Arktikum provide fascinating further perspectives on the Arctic theme.

Alvar Aalto's architecture and town plan



Alvar Aalto (1898 – 1976) had a major influence on the architecture of Rovaniemi: he designed several of the city's buildings and created many of its plans. In 1961, Aalto sketched out a three-building configuration to function as the city's administrative and cultural centre: a library building, concert and congress halls, and a town hall. Together, this cluster of buildings forms a monument in its own right. Moreover, known as the Reindeer Antler, Rovaniemi's town plan was designed by Alvar Aalto, in 1945. This much discussed plan was named after the 'picture puzzle' outlined on maps by the city centre: bounded by green areas the city's traffic zones, which form the limits of the heart of Rovaniemi, are reminiscent of a reindeer antler. This antler

joins together with the Rivers Ounas and Kemi to form a reindeer's head. An eye is formed by the city centre sports field, while the crown at the tips of the antler is depicted by residential streets that meander in the manner of reindeer trails.

Other parts of the Rovaniemi townscape designed by the same architect include the Korkalorinne residential area, known as the garden city of the Arctic Circle, the Aho residential and business premises on Koskikatu and Jaakonkatu, and the Maison Aho private residence (Pohjolankatu 32).

The Pilke Science Centre

Pilke is an example of ecological wooden construction at its best and is a showpiece of Finnish architecture. The façade is made of dark-stained spruce. Space, natural light, riverscapes and undulating hills, and a sense of space are the key elements of Pilke House's design. The building has 650 m² of exhibition space, as well as office space for 135 workers. Pilke was designed by Architectural Studio Artto Palo Rossi Tikka



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Architects, APRT. The building houses an interactive and wide-ranging exhibition on the importance of forests and a variety of workshops are offered.

Further details:

Arktikum: www.arkitikum.fi

City of Rovaniemi: <http://international.rovaniemi.fi/en/Services/Cultural-Services/Architecture/Alvar-Aalto>

Korundi House of Culture: www.korundi.fi

Pilke Science Center: www.sciencecentre-pilke.fi

h. Discovering Rovaniemi as the Conference Destination in Lapland

Rovaniemi has long traditions as a meeting place. These traditions go far to ancient history: Rovaniemi is located in the junction of two great rivers, which has made it easy to reach by boat or by road. People gathered here to trade goods and exchange news. Nowadays most guests arrive by airplane or train and travel to Rovaniemi for both leisure and business purposes. Rovaniemi has pioneered incentive travel business in Lapland in 1980's and is today highly desired MICE destination.

Altogether Rovaniemi has more than 100 different meeting rooms and venues. The largest conference capacity is 5200 people and there are several venues suitable for 100 – 450 people, not to forget all the inspirational venues like stylish log houses, igloos, kota-huts and saunas.

More information:

Rovaniemi Congresses, <https://www.visitrovaniemi.fi/rovaniemi-congresses/>



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4. Education and Research in Rovaniemi

Rovaniemi is a well-known university town. It is home to the University of Lapland, the Arctic Centre and the Multidimensional Tourism Institute. Their one of main field of specialization is Arctic studies.

University of Lapland

- International university of arts and sciences
- Founded in 1979
- Education and research in pedagogy, tourism, business, law, industrial arts, social sciences and Northern/Arctic affairs.
- In 2018, the University of Lapland had 4318 students.
- The total number of staff in 2018 was 642.

Arctic Centre

- Interdisciplinary centre and library for research, education and communication, specialising in Arctic studies
- Founded in 1989
- Location: Arktikum, Rovaniemi
- Staff: approximately 60

Multidimensional Tourism Institute

The Multidimensional Tourism Institute (MTI) combines all levels of tourism education as well as innovative research and development activities. The goal of the institute is to enhance the operational conditions of the tourism industry in cooperation with companies and public organizations. The institute comprises the tourism research of the University of Lapland, the field of tourism and hospitality management of Lapland University of Applied Sciences and the vocational education at the Lapland Tourism College.

Further details:

City of Rovaniemi, <http://international.rovaniemi.fi/en/Services/Education>

The Arctic Centre, www.arcticcentre.org

The Multidimensional Tourism Institute, <http://matkailu.luc.fi/In-English/Main-Page>

The University of Lapland, www.ulapland.fi



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5. Rovaniemi as a Business Hub

Rovaniemi is the commercial and logistic centre of Lapland, a hub for both trade and consumers. International business has been growing vigorously. Companies and investors appreciate Rovaniemi as a highly supportive environment for tourism, the creative sector, industrial production, IT, cold testing, commerce, services and many other lines of business.

In addition to the vivid city centre, which offers a wide range of services, the city also boasts a diverse concentration of special trade. A reliable and multifaceted network of services and infrastructure has elevated Rovaniemi into one of the most important centers of business in the Barents region.

Rovaniemi provides an ideal setting for both for traditional manufacturing - not least when cold technologies are concerned - as well as the creative industries. Rovaniemi is home to manufacturing companies with global activities: both Finnish (e.g. playground manufacturer Lappset) and foreign (e.g. BRP).

Further information:

Rovaniemi Regional Development Agency Ltd, <http://www.rovaniemenkehitys.fi/en/>



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6. History of Rovaniemi in a Nutshell

Located at the confluence of two large rivers, the most important transport routes at the time, Rovaniemi began to adopt the role of the "gateway to Lapland". The history of the Rovaniemi region stretches back some 8000 years. For thousands of years Rovaniemi was just a stopping place for hunters, fishermen and tradesmen who exported furs and other items from north to south.

Rovaniemi was permanently settled in the 11th to 12th centuries. At the turn of the 19th century Rovaniemi began to grow in the administrative, cultural and commercial centre of the Province of Lapland.

The modern look of the Rovaniemi is mainly due to the Second World War. During the war, Rovaniemi was destroyed, only a few houses remained in the centre. The reconstruction work was started in 1946 according to the town plan designed by the most famous Finnish architect, Alvar Aalto.

The word Rovaniemi has often been considered to be of Lappish origin, as "roavve" in Saami denotes a forested ridge or hill or the site of an old forest fire. In the dialects of southern Lapland, however, "rova" means a heap of stones, a rock or group of rocks in a stretch of rapids, or even a sauna stove.

More information:

City of Rovaniemi, <http://international.rovaniemi.fi/en/Services/About-Us>



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7. About Visit Rovaniemi

Visit Rovaniemi (Rovaniemi Tourism & Marketing Ltd.) is a regional marketing organisation founded in 2007 by the municipalities of Rovaniemi. Its main task is to provide Rovaniemi with image marketing, travel information, MICE marketing and PR services. In addition, Visit Rovaniemi coordinates and operates travel marketing for the region.

As a separate unit, Rovaniemi Congresses sells and brokers meeting facilities, conference services and the related products for domestic and international customers. Travel products and Rovaniemi-brand products and souvenirs are also sold to visitors from Tourist Information.

The company's overall business idea involves

- Offering centralised tourism services in Rovaniemi
- Developing and productising Rovaniemi's attractiveness as a destination
- Representing the interests of tourist companies and tourists
- Coordinating regional marketing
- Managing the Christmas brand
- Providing tourist information services
- Selling and supplying tourism products and services
- Developing regional MICE marketing (Rovaniemi Congresses)

Visit Rovaniemi is subsidiary of Rovaniemi Regional Development Agency Ltd (which owns 51 % of the company). The remaining 49% of the company is owned by over 200 local tourism companies. Financing for regional marketing is mainly derived from the stakeholder companies, the City of Rovaniemi and from profits from business operations.

In addition to cooperating with its owners and stakeholders, Visit Rovaniemi works in close co-operation with Lapland's other regional tourism organisations, Visit Finland, Finland Convention Bureau and Business Finland. Further partners include transport companies, international tour operators and media players (Finnish and international). Every year Visit Rovaniemi assists several hundred international media groups.



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8. Contact Details

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Rovaniemi Congresses	Internet:	www.visitrovaniemi.fi
Lordi's Square	Facebook:	www.facebook.com/VisitRovaniemi.fi
Maakuntakatu 29-31	Instagram:	www.instagram.com/visitrovaniemi
96200 ROVANIEMI	Twitter:	www.twitter.com/VisitRovaniemi
FINLAND	YouTube:	www.youtube.com/rovaniemiofficial
	TikTok:	www.tiktok.com/@visitrovaniemi
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