

Let's visit Lake Peipsi region!



Lake Peipsi is the biggest transboundary lake in Europe on the border between Estonia and Russia. This lake is a remnant of a bigger body of water which existed in this area during an Ice Age. It covers 3,555 km² and is the fifth largest in Europe. The water body consists of 3 lakes: the Great Lake, Lake Pihkva and Lake Lämmijärv. The wildlife in the lake is rich in species and fish. The lake has very significantly affected the life of the people living on the shore.

The **Lake Peipsi region** is characterised by diversity of nature (sandy beaches, wetlands and mires, rivers and forests) and old settlements; for centuries different cultures, nationalities and ethnic groups have lived together here.



Below please find a brief description of what our day in the neighbourhood might look like.



We will drive through the 7 km long street-like ribbon villages of the unique community of the **Old Believers**, who have kept their culture, customs and religious rituals unchanged for more than 1000 years. The way of life of the old-believers who live at the Lake Peipsi and the specific local villages create a unique landscape, which cannot be found anywhere else.

Our first stop will be at the **prayer house in the village of Varnja**. We are allowed to enter the sanctuary of this very special ethnic and cultural group and we will meet a representative of the congregation who will share with us special information about their customs, traditions and religion.



NB! All ladies must bring a scarf to cover their heads during the entire visit to the church to respect the local religion and traditions.



We will take a short walk in **Kasepää village** to take a better look on the notable architecture of the houses – the living rooms, auxiliary premises and the animal barn share the same roof – and the long and straight, manually dug onion beds which are quite a sight in summer, so are the huge onion piles in autumn.

In Kolkja village we will visit a **museum of Old Believers** which displays traditional clothes, crafts, tools, household items, and religious items of the Old-Believers. Our guide in the museum is a member of this special community who will also tell us interesting facts about their customs, traditions and religion.



Our next stop will be in town **Kallaste**, where we can have the best look at 143 km long and 48 km wide Lake Peipsi which also considered to be one of the best fish lakes in Europe . In addition we can admire 8 m high and 700 m long red Devonish sandstone rock being also a bird sanctuary for more than 1000 sand-martins (*Riparia riparia*).

We will visit **Alatskivi castle** and see the main building of the Alatskivi manor that has stood as a white fairy tale castle on the eastern border of Estonia already from the 19th century on. In the castle we will get to know about the life of squires, find out why one family needed so many different rooms, hear legends and stories.



Dinner will be served in one of the former rooms of the Alatskivi castle where now is located the **Alatskivi castle restaurant**. Castle-related history is also reflected in the Alatskivi castle restaurant through the main directions in the menu that will offer us dishes from Estonian cuisine.

Our last stop will be in the village of Rupsi where a tenant farm Oja was the home of the writers Juhan Liiv and Jakob Liiv. Today's **Liivs museum** gives us a picture of the 19th century peasant lifestyle in the Lake Peipsi region and we can acquaint ourselves with the life and literary heritage of writers Liiv.



More information on Lake Peipsi region can be found at <http://starover.eu/en> and <http://www.alatskiviloss.ee/eng/>