

The Republic of Karelia has great opportunities for developing different types of tourism and satisfying needs of travelers: there are more than 4 thousand registered historical, cultural and nature objects.

Also there are fair opportunities for development of different types of tourism in the Karelia: hunting and fishing, rest in cottages and on camp sites, treatments in sanatoriums during summer and winter seasons, active recreation, rafting and kayaking, benefiting fans of travel and judges of the beautiful.

Karelia is one of the most famous Russian territories in the international tourism thanks to the existence of unique architectural, cultural and historical objects on the islands of Kizhi, Valaam and on the Solovetsky Islands which are situated near administrative border of Karelia. They are included into the list of monuments of the world cultural heritage of UNESCO and are national property of Russia. The historical and cultural originality of Karelia, which distinguishes it from other territories of Russia is defined by also cultural heritage of four indigenous people which are historically living in this region - the Karelians, Finns, Veps, Russians who have created unique and original culture for ten centuries of cohabitation.

Karelia is the homeland of the Karelian-Finnish epos "Kalevala" (a literary monument of the world significance), the homeland of runopets and epic storytellers. The ancient Karelian, Veps, Pomor settlements with original architecture, which were built several centuries ago and now of great interest to fans of ethnographic tourism.

We are sure, that almost everybody have heard about Kizi, Valaam, Solovki and Kivach. Not only people from Karelia and Russia but also foreigners know our famous attractions. Today we would like to tell you about amazing places, which are not so popular, whereas they are worth seeing. Some sights are so remote, that you should be fit enough and posses your soul to reach them. Moreover we prepare an itinerary for everyone, who is interested in travelling, can't imagine life without getting fresh and stimulating experiences, desires to discover new fantastic spots and just wants to know more about our beloved Country and Region.

There are number of exiting places, which we would like to talk about:

- Mysterious **Vottovaara mountain**. It is situated on the West Karelian hill and its main peak is 417 meters above sea level.
- **Shardonskiye Islands** on Lake Onega. The archipelago represents a group of the islands (about 40) located only 10 km from the continent.
- Village **Nyhcha(щелчок)**, that it famous for its coast-dweller (Pomor) food. This old village is situated in the White Sea region. It is located 116 km from Belomorsk on the Nyukhcha river banks, 8 km from her inflow into the White Sea.
- Rock "**Impilakhti**" is known among alpinists in Karelia but not among ordinary people. It is 180 km. from Petrozavodsk, on the bank of the magnificent Lake Ladoga
- Village **Pegrema** is a magnificent example of wooden architecture of Zaonezhye. It is located on the Zaonezhsky peninsula on the west bank of the Unitsky Bay of Lake Onega

For now we are going to tell you about one attraction: Vottovaara Mountain.

Located in 20 km from Sukkozzero lake in Karelia, Vottovaara mountain is famous for its boulder strewn landscape. Mount Vottovaara — a complex of ancient stone structures known as seids — hanging or flying stones. The scale of the complex is amazing — over hundreds of large and small rocks form a complex system of geometric shapes and mazes. The size of the complex is much higher than all the public in Europe and Scandinavia, places of worship.

As glacial ice retreated about 10,000 years ago, it left behind strange boulders, known to locals as Seida, Seyda or Seid (Finnish language Seita). Portions of the mountain, representing nature or earth spirits, were evidently considered sacred to the Saami people. Saamis believed that spirits lived in these stones. A sacrifice usually was done near the seida. The unusual thing about Vottovaara seidas is that many of them look like they were intricately cut. Many people still question the natural origin of Vottovaara boulders.

After receiving publicity when an adventurer rediscovered it in 1978, the mountain quickly became popular place for artists, musicians, and those intrigued by ancient mysteries. Creative people claimed to gain great insights and inspirations while visiting there, while others said they found it eerie and even terrifying. Modern Finnish and Russian pagan groups came to regard it as a sacred site.

Superstitious people claim that Vottovaara mountain is the place of the dark forces, and consider it as gateway to the parallel Universe. Some folks have seen UFOs around the mountain. Unusual landscapes and amazing scenery of Vottovaara attract hikers and photographers.

The mountain is pretty hard to reach, as impassable roads, dangerous bridges and fast streams are posing risk to travelers.

In conclusion we would like to say that these places are really worth seeing. The problem is that very few people heard about them and they are in remote places. It is necessary to take the following measures:

- Advertizing. It is essential to write actively about them in the press and on the tourist websites in order to many people find them interesting
- Transport. It is needful to organize transport connection to these places at all seasons of the year.
- Sponsors. Work on development of tourism is impossible without material inputs.