WELCOME

Suomenlinna was added to the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites as a unique example of the military architecture of its era. Suomenlinna is a bastion fortress with an irregular shape and a unique history in serving the defence of three realms: Sweden, Russia and Finland.

Start your visit from the Suomenlinna Visitor Centre and get the best tips to explore the fortress.

The main attractions can be experienced on the Blue Route, which is about 1.5 kilometres. Follow the blue line on the map and the blue signs along the route. The blue dots on the map show the locations of the main attractions and information boards.

SUOMENLINNA CHURCH

The church on Suomenlinna was built in 1854 to serve as a Russian Orthodox garrison church. As Finland took control of the island in the 1920s, it was converted into a Lutheran place of worship. A lighthouse, serving both air and sea traffic, still operates in the steeple.

DRY DOCK

Suomenlinna’s dry dock is one of Europe’s oldest operating dry docks. In the 1760s, ships for the Swedish naval fleet were built here, under the supervision of naval architect F. H. af Chapman. Nowadays, the dry dock is used for renovating old sailing boats.

GREAT COURTYARD

Designed by the fortress’s founder Augustin Ehrensvärd, the Great Courtyard was completed in the 1760s and served as the main square. It was badly damaged in the Crimean War in 1855. Points of interest in the square include Ehrensvärd’s tomb.

KUSTAANMIEKKA

Kustaanmiekka is home to Suomenlinna’s original bastion and a late-19th-century Russian defence line, complete with sand embankments and artillery points. The Kustaanmiekka bastion area provides stunning seascapes all the way to the mainland.

KING’S GATE

The monumental King’s Gate is the iconic symbol of Suomenlinna. King’s Gate was built in 1753–1754 on the site where a ship carrying the fortress’s founder, King Adolf Frederick of Sweden, was anchored while he inspected the construction of the fortress in 1752.

1748 Finland is part of the Kingdom of Sweden. Construction of the sea fortress begins, led by Augustin Ehrensvärd. In 1750, Fredrick I of Sweden gives the fortress the name of Sveaborg.

1788 War breaks out between Russia and Sweden, and the fortress operates as a naval base.

1809 The fortress is surrendered to the Russian army and becomes a Russian naval base for the next 110 years. In 1809, Finland is made an autonomous part of the Russian Empire.

1855 The Crimean War. The fortress is badly damaged under Anglo-French naval bombardment.

1918 The Finnish Civil War. A camp for prisoners of war is set up at the fortress. The fortress is annexed by Finland and named Suomenlinna.

1939 At the start of WWII, the fortress serves as a coastal artillery, anti-aircraft and submarine base.

1973 Suomenlinna was inscribed to the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites as a unique example of the military architecture of its era.

1991 Suomenlinna is one of the most popular places to visit in Finland and a vibrant district of Helsinki with a wide range of services and events all year round. In addition to hosting large numbers of visitors, Suomenlinna is also home to 800 permanent residents. The Governing Body of Suomenlinna, a government agency under the Ministry of Education and Culture, is responsible for the restoration, development and maintenance of the fortress as well as managing it as a visitor attraction.

The fortress is conserved and developed in accordance with the principles of sustainable tourism and the aim is to conserve it for future generations. Be sure to follow all instructions during your visit and help us preserve this World Heritage Site.