

# Nature traveller personas

of project Kurenniemi - cultural value of Russia and Finland through M. Agricola trail

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# History and culture enthusiasts

**Alina and Alexander** are an elderly couple who are interested in history and culture. They live in St. Petersburg, and they have long wanted to explore the strip of the Gulf of Finland, formerly known as the Swedish Royal Road. Especially they wish to see the historically significant places and hear stories of the area's cultural heritage. Alina also wants to know about the relation of the area to the father of the Finnish written language, Mikael Agricola. Alexander is interested to the war history, but he fears that some of the points of interest may be hard to reach because he is not as supple as in his youth. Alina has problems with eyesight, and she hopes that the routes are clearly marked and mapped to the nature. They both expect personal and quality service.

## Preferred routes

- Cultural heritage -route
- Wonders of nature -route

## Places of interest

- Village of Kirkkojärvi
- Church of Uusikirkko
- Memorial of Mikael Agricola
- The ruins of the monastery

## Benchmarking

Alina and Alexander benchmark opportunities by asking recommendations, studying travel brochures and literature. They also search info of the area from internet, but because of technical problems they have difficulties in getting to the right resources.

## Decision making

Couple decides to visit the Kyrönniemi nature reserve on the first week of May when spring is well under way, and when there is not that many other travellers. Alina gets a tip from a friend of a nice family-owned bed and breakfast, which Alina books by phone. B&B fits in her dream to stay for two nights in a cosy place with interesting history. Owner also helps them to book a guided history tour with a local guide in advance.

## Travelling

Alina and Alexander begin their journey from St. Petersburg early in the morning. They prefer to travel with their own car so that they can stop at places of interest whenever they want. B&B is located few kilometres from the seashore. Estimated time of travel is just 2 hours and Alexander wonders why they haven't visited the area before since it is so close.

## Arriving to the destination

Couple arrives to the destination, and they decide to enjoy a late brunch in the B&B. Accommodation is charming and it has all the necessary facilities. Owner of the place is a great cook and a good source of information. She recommends points of interest and local craftsman shops for shopping souvenirs for grandchildren.

## Main activities

Alina and Alexander spend the first day wandering along the nature paths of the Kyrönniemi nature reserve. Alexander is disappointed when he realizes that one of the paths with the most interesting views is not accessible and they need to take another route. They stop to have a packed lunch in one of the recreational zones. Alina is glad when she finds well equipped fireplace with ready chopped firewood.

On the second day Alina and Alexander visit the church of Uusikirkko with the local guide, who tells them stories of the area's history. They also shop the recommended handmade souvenirs from the small town.

Third morning is reserved for enjoying seashore views and relaxing.

## Heading back home

After lunch travellers pack their belongings and head towards home. On the way they decide to visit larch forest of Lintula "Линдуловская роща". It turns out to be a magnificent place with riverside views and interesting history.

## After the journey

Couple share their experiences with friends and relatives. Alexander wonders if they could go to Kyrönniemi again with their family later in the summer. Grandchildren would certainly be interested in the activities organized by the visitor centre. Paddling lessons and mountain bike riding sounded fun for younger generation. Alina is also interested going back. She spotted an advertisement of a herbal cooking class which she would like to attend to.



# Nature wonder hunter

**Vasili** is a 30-year-old man who is a passionate bird watcher. He spends most of his free time outdoors spotting and photographing rare birds. Vasili values nature and he is worried about the pollution and climate change. Vasili wishes to consume as little as possible, and he prefers vegetarian food. He has decided that he no longer wants to travel abroad by plane and prefers domestic nature destinations. Vasili lives alone in a small flat in the city centre of Vyborg. He works as a mathematics teacher in a local school. Vasili has been visiting the area of Cape Kyrönniemi for many years. Originally, he participated in a joint bird watching trip with other enthusiasts who visited the site. Since then, he has visited the area regularly.

## Preferred routes

- Wonders of nature -route
- Coastal path

## Places of interest

- Beachfronts, coastal meadows and breakwaters
- Eutrophic marshes and sand dunes

## Benchmarking

Area of Cape Kyrönniemi is often mentioned in the social media posts and in a Telegram group where other bird watchers post their observations and share locations of rare species. Vasili hopes there aren't many other travellers in the area since it is becoming increasingly popular. Excessive noise easily disturbs birds.

## Decision making

Vasili decides to visit Kyrönniemi early in April. Usually, Vasili spends his nights in his own tent, but this time he wants to experience something new and ends up booking online a luxury tent for two nights with modern facilities. Glamping site is located near the yellow beach (Bukhta Zheltaya). Fortunately, the glamping is also open, and the tents have heating system.

## Travelling

Vasili doesn't own a car and therefore he travels by public transport. Luckily there is a regular bus travelling along the coastal route between Vyborg and St. Petersburg. The bus leaves conveniently in the afternoon just after 4 p. m. Vasili asks the driver to stop at a sign that reads "Monument to M. Agricola." There is a short 1.5 km walk from the stop to the glamping.

## Arriving to the destination

Vasili arrives in Kyrönniemi on Friday night. He gets a key from the reception to his luxury tent. The facilities correspond to the description on the website. The tent has a refrigerator and a private shower and toilet next door. Unfortunately, the accommodation's restaurant is already closed, but in the tent, there is a welcome basket waiting.

## Main activities

Vasili wakes up on early Saturday morning. He packs the snacks that he saved from the welcome basket. Vasili wants to go to the seashore as soon as the sun rises. Then he has a good opportunity to see the birds migrating to the area. Vasili spends the morning at the beach. At noon, he eats at the on-site restaurant and then rests for a moment in his tent. In the afternoon, Vasili goes on nature trails and visits the photo exhibition about the nature of the area, which is on display at the information center. As the evening fades, Vasili wanders in the woods close to the glamping site and enjoys the singing of the birds.

The next day, Vasili wakes up early again and re-visits the shoreline. He manages to photograph both a herd of herons and cormorants.

## Heading back home

According to the schedule, the bus back to Vyborg passes the nearest bus stop on Sunday at two o'clock. Unfortunately the bus is half an hour late and Vasili is already worried that it won't come at all. On the way back, Vasili browses through his camera for photos and recounts his experiences. He is pleased with the amount of his observations and his experience in general.

## After the journey

Vasili shares his findings on his social media channel. He also tells about his trip to his co-workers and students as well as other bird watchers. He is also already planning a new trip. Maybe he could ask along a friend interested in birdwatching.



## Activity enthusiasts

**Nikolai, Olga, Sergei & Oksana** form a family which love spending time together in different recreational areas. They usually go for weekend trips by their own modified van, but during wintertime they also rent cottages. They like to spend time together as a family. Parents Nikolai and Olga and the children Sergei and Oksana are interested in nature activities like trying out sup-boarding, kayaking, and snowmobiling. They have visited the area of Cape Kyrönniemi many years ago when their children were just toddlers. Now they have heard that the area has been updated to a nature reserve with new facilities and service providers.

### Preferred routes

- Winter wonders -route
- Adventure -route for mountain bikes

### Places of interest

- Forest and seaside
- The pole sledge of the visitor centre

### Benchmarking

The family's father, Nikolai, is looking for information about the area on the Internet and social media. He also notices an article about wintertime mountain biking. Article has beautiful pictures which were taken in the Kyrönniemi area. According to the advertising material, there are many different winter activities in the area. The visitor centre is also open during winter.

### Decision making

The family decides to go on a trip at the start of the children's winter vacation. Sunny weather and a few degrees of frost have been promised for the beginning of the week. Nikolai books a cottage online with two bedrooms and a well-equipped kitchen. The cottage also has a sauna. Nikolai also reserves a mountain biking tour for the first day.

## PLANNING

### Travelling

Family lives in St. Petersburg from where they drive to the area of Cape Kyrönniemi in about two hours. Along the way, they stop at a store where they buy groceries for the whole duration of their visit. The son of the family, Sergei, makes sure everyone gets their favourite treats from the store.

### Arriving to the destination

It is snowing during the end of the drive and the visibility is poor. That's why the family accidentally drives past the intersection in the direction of Kyrönniemi. Fortunately, Mom Olga notices the error soon and they find the right path towards the accommodation. The snow-covered cottage looks inviting. There is no need to pick up the key as they have received the door code in advance.

## TRAVELLING & ARRIVING

### Main activities

Over the vacation, the family is actively experimenting with a variety of winter sports. On the first day they rent skis from the visitor centre. On the afternoon they get to try out the mountain bikes, which is especially exciting for the children since they usually bicycle only in the summer. In the evening, after an active day, the family spends time together. They cook in the cottage, have a sauna and play board games.

The next day starts with exploring the nature trails. Along the trails, there are tasks for children which Sergei and Oksana are happy to perform. For example, they look for traces of animals and identify trees. The family also goes ice fishing as the father of the family is a passionate fisherman. A pole sledge has also been built on the ice.

## STAYING

As a surprise, the family's mother has also booked a guided snowmobile safari for the whole family. During the safari, they get to cook sausages and pancakes by the campfire.

### Heading back home

The children are upset when it is time to go home. Luckily the holiday is only halfway through and the parents have promised to have some nice things to do for the rest of the week as well.

### After the journey

The trip was successful, although the mother of the family was annoyed by the lack of guidance and the lack of a coffee maker in the cottage. She writes a review to TripAdvisor app and shares few photos of their trip.

## LEAVING



## Local

**Maria** is a local living nearby the Kyrönniemi area. She spends most of her free time in the nature with her dog, Boris. She loves picking up berries and mushrooms. Her newest interest is wild herbs which she has learned to recognize and use in cooking. She appreciates all things her environment has to offer and is very keen on protecting them.

Maria lives on a farm. She wonders if she should set up some kind of accommodation on the farm grounds. She has been following trends and noticed that many tourists of today are interested in more exotic options for overnight stays. Her farm would have plenty of room for glamping tents, for example.

### Preferred routes

- Quiet forest paths
- Coastal path

### Places of interest

- Beach at the sunset
- Communal camping area

### Local promoter

Maria has lived in the area all her life and loves its peace and closeness to nature. When she is not picking up berries, mushrooms and wild herbs, she likes to take pictures of small wonders she spots in nature. She posts regularly new pictures of her environment on her social media account. She has many active followers, both domestic and international, who comment on her pictures. Through her social media she has even made a few online friends who would like to visit Maria and the beautiful area of Kyrönniemi. Maria thinks that she should learn more about the cultural history of the site as well so that she can act as a local guide for her friends.

### Ways of travelling

Maria usually spends time walking or jogging in the area with Boris. When she wants to get a little further away from home, she jumps on the back of her bike. Boris enjoys bike trips from a bike trailer.

### Preferred services

Maria is annoyed that some of the visitors leave rubbish behind. During the walks, Maria often has her own garbage bag with her in which she gathers garbage she finds in nature. She does not understand how some people can be so indifferent towards nature. As there are no public trash bins in the area, not all but some, visitors just leave their garbage behind.

Maria would like tourists to be better informed about the biodiversity of the

area. She thinks that signboards with information about how visitors should contribute to the preservation of area, are necessary. Keeping the area clean benefits both people and nature as it protects area's many species and lets the next guests enjoy area's beauty too.

On social media she has seen nature park sign with the text: "Take nothing but pictures, leave nothing but footprints." She would like to place similar signs to Kyrönniemi area. In addition, Maria hopes other signboards with information about the historical events of Kyrönniemi would be placed at the site as well. She has understood from the stories of the older local people that the history of the area is quite interesting, which is why Maria hopes that the historical events would be shared with a wider audience in one way or other.

### Hopes for the future

Even though Maria loves the quietness of the area, she thinks that if the number of tourists were to increase, that would have its own benefits too. By using local services, the tourists would support the local economy. Larger number of visitors would probably prevent people from building temporary huts from all kinds of junk on the beach which has been an issue in the past.

Her walks with Boris pass sometimes a place where tourists park their cars. A couple of times she has met people who have been interested in talking with her about the area and its places of interest – these meetings are the highlights of her weeks. A while ago she exchanged contact information with a Finnish girl who she plans on visiting as soon as possible.



## International travellers

**Lauri & Helena** are friends who love to travel together both within their home country as well as abroad. They usually select smaller destinations which are not yet crowded. Lauri wishes to become a writer and is currently doing genealogy research of his grandmother's side of the family. When Lauri's grandmother was little, she used to live with her parents, in Vyborg region near Kuolemajärvi. Lauri is interested in visiting local places after his ancestors' footsteps. Lauri's best friend Helena is studying to be a nature instructor. She wants to join Lauri in his search for his roots. At the same time, Helena wants to find inspiration for her own future career as a nature instructor. During their travels friends often stay in a van or in their own tent.

### Preferred routes

- Coastal path
- Wonders of nature -route

### Places of interest

- Kuolemajärvi parish
- Memorial of Mikael Agricola

### Searching for information

While doing the genealogy research Lauri has interviewed his grandmother. She has mentioned few locations which he has mapped with the help of his friend, Helena. Helena prefers to search for information online or alternatively, inspect paper maps if available.

### Ways of travelling

Friends have decided to visit the mapped locations together during their summer holiday. The duo is going to travel to the area from Finland in Lauri's family's van. Using their own car allows free passage in the Vyborg and Kyrönniemi regions according to a flexible schedule.

### Arrival and accommodation

The duo has previously travelled around Europe in the same van they are planning to use this time too. On their trip to Europe, they used a map application in which users have marked suitable locations, "bush parks", for overnight stays for vans. Lauri and Helena have checked that there seems to be two bush parks near the Kyrönniemi area, the nearest of which is located at the shoreline of the Gulf of Finland about 5 kilometers away from the Kyrönniemi nature reserve. They have decided that, that place is a good starting point for their five-day trip. First night they will stay in the van but as they have also packed a tent with them they are able to spend the night in nature. They plan to refine their itinerary as the journey progresses and according to their mood.

### Preferred activities

Although Lauri and Helena travel to the area together, they are planning to spend a lot of time on their own. Lauri wants to wander around the Kuolemajärvi parish trying to spot the details of environment he has learned from his grandmother. Afterwards he plans on spending long times on the beach writing about his feelings and imagining what his great-grandparents' life in the area was like, almost a hundred years ago. Helena enjoys walking along the beaches and in the woods at her own pace. As a part of her nature instructor's studies, she is going to plan a nature program service suitable for the Kyrönniemi area. She wants to gather information about the places of interest and interview local people. Although she is a bit sceptical if the latter wish will work out as she doesn't speak any Russian.

### Heading back home

When the car is packed and the time has come to return home, two friends feel wistful. Even though the trip was not full of activities, Lauri and Helena enjoyed it a lot.

### After the journey

On the weekend following the trip to Kyrönniemi area, Lauri visits his grandmother. They go through the pictures Lauri has taken during the trip. Lauri's grandmother recognizes some of the sceneries in the pictures – some places have not changed that much. During the visit Helena met a local woman with whom she exchanged contact information. They message each other regularly. Helena's new friend would soon like to visit Helena in Finland.