

Welcome to the Old Mail Road

between Stockholm and Turku. You can travel throughout the history and in the present day, in reality as well as in fantasy.

The Mail Road dates back to the era of Queen Christina of Sweden in the 17th century when the Swedish postal services were begun. Today the road looks very different from those times, but most parts of the route are still used.

You can travel along the entire road or choose parts of it. Take your time and choose your kind of transport. Along the route there are sights, catering and overnight accommodations, as well as different kinds of activities. The Mail Road preserves and highlights our cultural heritage, and shows the fascinating development from the post carried by foot to modern means of communication and information technology.

2 - 3 days, 65 km sign-posted cycling route

Itinerary: Storby – Kyrkoby – Marby – Kattby – Bjärnström – Emkarby – Gölby – Ämnäs – Godby – Haraldsby – Kastelholm – Tosarby – Finby – Bomarsund – Prästö – Vargata – Hullvik.

Continue to Kumlinge and Brändö by ferry. The 65-km-route across the main island of Åland on the historic Mail Road is sign-posted with red kilometre poles after old models. Sometimes you follow the main roads, and sometimes the old, winding village roads.

Sights and services: Eckerö Mail & Customs House from 1828, with accommodation services and museums, offers an impressive starting or finishing point for the route. **Medieval churches of Eckerö and Hammarland** are worth a visit, and the latter one also has old barns, pre-historic cemeteries, and verdant groves next to the church. In Godby there is a tourist information office, pharmacy, and shops. In Kastelholm lies **Åland's only medieval castle, a prison museum**, and an open-air museum with traditional farmyard houses. **Bomarsund** fortress ruins date back to the Russian era. The Mail Road on the main island of Åland finishes at Bomarsund jetty. From here the post was taken by a rowing-boat over to the island of Vårdö. Today you can travel by a cable ferry from Prästö over to Vårdö. In Vargata village there are beautiful shipmasters' homes, and the childhood home of Sally Salminen, one of Åland's foremost authors. In Hullvik harbour there is a memorial stone raised for the mail route. From Hummelvik the journey can be continued by an **archipelago ferry** to Kumlinge and further to Brändö.

Accommodation: There are plenty of accommodation alternatives along the road. In Eckerö there are several campsites, guesthouses, and overnight cabins.

More information about Mail Road can be found in the brochure and in a booklet 'Mail Road across Åland' which can be purchased at e.g. **Åland Tourist Information**, Stora gatan 8, Mariehamn. Ph: +358 18 24000, E-mail: **info@visitaland.com**

Welcome to discover the historic mail route!

Source: **www.postvagen.aland.fi**

Åland Route

From the Stone Age to the present day

The Åland Route offers the best of Åland's nature and history from the Stone Age until the modern time. Åland is called the Pearl of the Baltic Sea, and thus filled with plenty of opportunities for cycling.

Along the Åland Route you can travel through history and landscape, in perfect harmony and relaxation.

175 km, 3-4 days, sign-posted cycling route

Itinerary: Mariehamn – Jomala Church – Jomala by – Godby – Kastelholm Castle – Björby – Bomarsund – Vårdö Church – Simskäla – Långbergsöda – Borgboda – Nääs – Tjudö – Geta Church – Hällö jetty–Skarpnåtö – Mörby – Hellesby – Kungsö- Mariehamn

Along the route you pass the major historic sights, including **Kastelholm Castle, Bomarsund fortress ruins, Stone Age Village** and **six medieval churches**.

Enjoy two extensive trips on bicycle ferries, the rocky northern part of Åland, the inland lakes and archipelago nature, groves (i.e. Ramsholmen & Skarpnåtö), fantastic views from Åland's scenic hills and much, much more.

Shops, kiosks, cafés and overnight accommodations are located at many points throughout the route.

Combine the route with a visit to Åland's archipelago. From Hummelvik on Vårdö you can carry your bike free of charge onboard Ålandstrafiken's ferries to Enklinge, Kumlinge, and Brändö, with a further connection to the mainland of Finland. www.alandstrafiken.aland.fi

On the last day of the trip, have a look at Åland's unusual midsummer-poles. Or, follow the Midsummer-pole Safari along the sign-posted cycling routes in southwestern Åland. This route is easy to follow.

Further information about the Midsummer-pole Safari is available through Åland Tourist Information, ph: +358 18 24000, E-post: info@visitaland.com

Source: www.visitaland.com

Cycling Tour to Kungsö & Sålis Battery Hills

Beautiful roads and great experiences

Åland is ideal for cycling tours. Don't hesitate to go cycling according to your own schedule, but the easiest way is to follow the sign-posted cycling routes that lead to historical places. We will describe some of them here but there are many more to visit, such as **Kastelholm Castle** and **Bomarsund fortress ruins** in Sund and Vårdö. Choose your route, and combine it with other routes, or compose your very own route. Åland has a tradition of outdoor recreation services and has a lot to offer throughout the year.

Kungsö Battery Hill

Kungsö coast battery was a Russian fortification that was built during the First World War. The fortification was demolished in 1919, and the ruins are now open to the public in such a way that any imaginative person can still hear the canons thunder and smell the gun smoke.

Take the road no. 1 towards Gottby, turn left at the main road crossing in Gottby, turn left again towards 'Båtviken' and follow the signs.

The old battery road is cobbled. The view along the road up to the watchtower is breathtaking. At the top there is information and signs. Around the fortification there is a 3-kilometre long trail, and at the very top there is a lookout tower with a splendid view of the southwest of Åland. On the road back to Mariehamn you may stop at **Ramsholmen nature reserve**.

Sålis Battery

If your starting point is in Eckerö, it is easy to cycle to Sålis battery which is similar to Kungsö battery. The Russian coast battery consisted of 10 batteries with different details but all with 2-6 canons. In Sålis there were 3 152-mm canons.

* Finding Sålis battery is easy; just take the road no. 1 from Eckerö towards Mariehamn and follow the special green bicycle signs that lead you to Sålis battery and greater heights!

Source: www.visitaland.com

Järsö Route

Archipelago awaits you just a stone's throw from Mariehamn

The Järsö Route is a 28-kilometre long archipelago route reaching across the beautiful small bridges to Järsö where the sea has a rich birdlife. The road is not sign-posted, but is very easy to follow. The route offers a perfect start or finishing off for a cycling vacation, or just a nice day excursion if you have a couple of spare hours to spend and wish to experience archipelagic environs.

Itinerary

Centre of Mariehamn – Ålandsvägen – Västra Ytternäsvägen – Nåtö – Järsö recreation area – return via Gröna Udden's campsite – Parkgatan – centre of Mariehamn.

Sights: 2-kilometre long Nåtö nature trail through forested meadows and groves with abundant flora. **2-kilometre nature trail through Järsö recreation area** featuring archipelago nature, smooth, flat cliffs, views of the outer archipelago and a b.b.q. area.

Bathing-beaches in Espholm, Gröna Udden and Lilla Holmen. You can go hiking along the 2-kilometre long nature trail in Järsö recreation area and enjoy the fantastic view of the southern Mariehamn archipelago. If you wish to discover more of the archipelago, we can recommend island-hopping by bicycle in the archipelago.

Source: www.visitaland.com

Northern Archipelago by bike

Sea breezes, quiet moments and silence

Welcome to the archipelago of Åland, and to a place you will want to revisit in the future. Along this route you can have a taste of the mainland of Åland, as well as of the fascinating archipelago.

Itinerary:

Osnäs – Brändö – Vårdö - Bomarsund – Lumparland – Kumlinge – Brändö -

Osnäs. Alternatively, the route can be started from Långnäs or Bomarsund.

Sights & services:

Rich experiences in nature and living archipelago environs. The route follows the waterfront, often across bridges and road embankments. Rich bird life, fishing and kayaking facilities. Look for places for swimming! Rent a cottage, stay next to the sea, relax and sleep well. What's more, island-hopping is also a cheap way to travel.

Visit **Archipelago Museum** on Lappo, and **Hermas Homestead Museum** on Enklinge. On Vårdö there is **School Museum** and beautiful shipmasters' farmhouses. In the district of Sund there are the ruins of **Bomarsund Fortress**, built during the Russian era. The route is well-suited for children. The stages are short and there are many ferry legs in between. The roads are not busy except at the time of the ferry arrivals and departures.

It is necessary to plan the ferry legs carefully; additional details on the archipelago traffic are available from Ålandstrafiken, **www.alandstrafiken.aland.fi**, ph. +358 18 25155. You can tailor-make your own island-hopping route according to the ferry timetables and services available by the local Skärgårdsleden companies.

Start and finish your cycling vacation at the place of your choice. You can also combine your cycling tour with a route in the southern Åland archipelago. Archipelago ferries are free of charge for cyclists. However, trips on special bicycle ferries are charged according to their tariffs.

Read more about the sights and services of the archipelago municipalities in the travel itineraries.

Source: www.visitaland.com

Brändö – unique nature and excellent environs for cyclists

Cycling by the waterfront

By bicycle it is easy to get very close to nature. Also, Brändö is one of the few places where you can experience absolute silence.

The ferry route to the easternmost Åland archipelago starts from Hummelvik on Vårdö, and takes about 2½ hours with stops at several harbours on other islands. Cyclists travel free of charge. Don't forget to enjoy and breathe in the sea air out on the ferry deck.

Perfect to be discovered by bike

The municipality of Brändö consists of 1,200 islands and skerries in the far eastern parts of Åland archipelago, and within a 30-minute ferry crossing from the mainland of Finland.

Many of the largest islands are connected to each other by bridges and road embankments, and the sea is always at present. There is a 25-kilometre road from the southern tip to the northern part of Brändö, and there are also smaller roads to be discovered. Brändö offers perfect environs for bicycle trips! When cycling in the archipelago, you will soon notice the relaxed atmosphere and total silence. Sit down on a smooth cliff, listen to the bird song and wind – without any disturbing noises.

Nature, sea and sun!

In the spring and early summer, the nature is filled with bright colours. Road banks are painted with meadow flowers in all hues. Water is very clear and blue, and rich in fish.

Brändö has maintained a cultural landscape with old villages, meadows and fields. There are several traditional stone walls built of grey granite stones to keep the sheep and cattle safe. On Brändö you can also find the only herd of milk sheep in Finland. Brändö's largest islands Lappo, Åva and Jurmo can be visited by archipelago ferries, and Skärgårdsleden's companies will do their best to make you enjoy your stay. Read more about Brändö in the travel itineraries.

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Source: www.visitaland.com

Discover the Southern Archipelago of Åland by bicycle

Island-hopping for both body and soul

Itinerary: Långnäs in Lumparland – Kökar- Sottunga – Föglö – Svinö in Lumparland

Sights & Services

The ferry between Långnäs and Kökar passes through the beautiful archipelago, and takes about 2.5 hours.

Kökar, far out at sea, offers barren archipelago scenery and exciting history. On the island of Hamnö, where the church is situated, remnants of medieval buildings have been excavated, among others a Franciscan monastery. Visit the exhibition in the monastery cellar next to the church. On Hellsö there is Kökar Homestead Museum. A 600-metre nature walk from Hamnövägen leads to the Bronze Age settlement of Otterböte. The island of Källskär is also worth a visit. In summertime there are guided boat excursions daily from Karlby to Källskär. There are shops at Karlby and Hellsö. There are swimming facilities at Sandvik and Karlby.

After a tour to Kökar, you can take the ferry towards the mainland of Åland, and go ashore on Sottunga. This 'Green Island' by the fairway has an interesting miniature society, and is the smallest municipality of Finland. From Sottunga you can continue to Överö on Föglö which consists of numerous islands of different sizes, and offers a wide range of scenery. Föglö has a medieval church, and walking trails in Jyddö and Hastersboda.

You can have overnight stays in each municipality if you wish to discover the archipelago in deep. The islands have a lot to offer, and you will get life-long memories to cherish.

Degerby is the name of the main village and harbour on Föglö, and there you will find the most services. From Degerby you can take the ferry back to Svinö in Lumparland. By now, you will hopefully have enough impressions of the archipelago, and can start to plan a revisit...

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