

Ruska 2023 - Ride across Finland

Everything participants must know

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Contact

Email randonneursfi@gmail.com or call +358 50 5822386

Mikko Mäkipää

Before ride

Registration

Registration link [here](#).

You can register and edit your answers until 3rd of September.

Bus transport from Helsinki to Liepāja

There are few seats available in a bus from Helsinki to Liepāja on Thursday (13:30 ferry) 14.9.

Price including the bicycle, but without a ferry ticket is 100 euros. Contact

randonneursfi@gmail.com for details.

Sending luggage to finish line

I assume many riders want to send luggage to the finish line. After a couple of days on the road a set of clean clothes waiting at finish is a good motivation to keep going.

The easiest option from Finland is with Matkahuolto to [Kilpisjärvi](#). Depending on the size of luggage the price is around 10 euros. With Matkahuolto you can order the delivery online and drop your bag to any service point. You can also use mail or any other service that fits you.

From Latvia you can use for example Omniva to send your parcel to home or finish.

Solo or pair

You may ride either as a solo or as a pair. Any rule that applies to other people doesn't affect members of a pair. They may for example help, draft and share equipment with each other.

However all the rules about 3rd party support also apply to pairs.

Before start you may at any time choose to ride as a pair with another participant, but category can't be changed after start. If one member of a pair is late or scratches, then so does the other.

Booking accommodation before ride

In Ruska you may book your accommodation before start. However you are not allowed to have any special arrangements that would make it similar to private accommodation. For example booking a service that is not publicly available or known of.

I should remind you that booking accommodation beforehand might not help you. Weather, technicals and tiredness may push you to ride too far to make it to your pre-booked accommodation in time.

Explaining Ruska's rules to your family and friends

It is important that you briefly explain Ruska's rules to your family and friends who may be following the event. They are likely to be enthusiastic and try to help you in a way that could be considered 3rd party support. Key point would be that they may not tell you any information (for example in social media) that would affect your ride. They may not, for example, warn you about weather on the route or opening hours and availability of services.

After ride

After party and accommodation

After party will be held on Saturday 23.9. in restaurant Haltinmaa (Naalikuja 1, 99490 Kilpisjärvi) at 19 o'clock. Buffet dinner is 18 euros. Details of sign up to the registered participants later.

Accommodation at Lapland hotel Kilpis can be bought with discount price with code "ALLPYOR23" until 21.8. from the website <https://www.laplandhotels.com/FI/etusivu.html>

Discount prices are for stays between 21.-24.9. Limited number of rooms available with prices 113€/1 person, 126€/2 persons and 162€/3 persons per night.

Getting back home

In short, there are daily bus connections from finish to Rovaniemi. From Kolari and Rovaniemi you can catch a train to anywhere in Finland.

For foreign participants there are airports, for example, in Tromsø, Kittilä and Rovaniemi with daily connections.

There is a bus from Ollibus from Kilpisjärvi to Kolari and Rovaniemi that will arrive in time for the 17:45 train from Rovaniemi. Details of sign up for the bus to the registered participants later.

During ride

Online tracking

Tracking will be voluntary, but recommended.

Tracking is done with Team locator app again. You can download it for Android/iOs.

Android: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.tonikorin.team_locator_r

iOs: <https://apps.apple.com/fi/app/team-locator/id961045222>

Registered riders will get further instructions to test the app before start.

If you wish to use SPOT or inReach for live tracking send your url by mail to randonneursfi@gmail.com.

Safety on route

In every sense you are on the road on your own. There is no kind of organization to help you during the ride. If you have an accident or other emergency your contacts are 112 or locals who can help you. Naturally at that point you must use any means necessary to get help.

If you happen to see another rider who needs help, you must stop to help them.

The rider receiving help from another rider is considered scratched.

Services on route

In short. There are very few. Regardless of which route you choose there will be long distances between towns. Do your homework and figure out what services are available. Longest distances between services should be around 100 km, but opening hours may be limited. Keep in mind that opening hours might be different from what you find online.

Weather on route

Temperature is likely to be between 0 and 15 C most of the time. Minus degrees are likely during night and early morning once you reach the polar circle. Prolonged snowfall and ice is possible, but very unlikely.

Social media

There will be followers online who want to know how you are doing. It is strongly recommended that you post once or twice a day how you are doing using #ruska2023. At least post something when you arrive at the controls.

It doesn't matter which social media you prefer to use. Social media links will be listed on the start list at Randonneurs Finland website.

Communicating with family, friends and followers is allowed as long as you don't ask or receive advice that would affect your riding.

Important locations, start, controls and finish

Here are all the relevant locations on a [map](#).

Pre-ride meeting in

You can collect your brevet card from Līva Hotel at Lielā iela 11 Liepāja between 16-19 on Friday 15.9.

Controls

Remember that you are at the controls as an ordinary guest. There are no special privileges for participants. A proof of arrival to the controls and finish, for example a photo, is recommended.

Start Liepāja

You will get the first stamp to your brevet card when you collect it.

Control 1 Tartu

You get the stamp from Eesti Üliõpilaste Selts (Jaan Tõnissoni 1, Tartu). The house is open 24/7. Ring the doorbell or knock on the door.
The house is also the exact location of the control.

Control 2 Vaasa

Order of riding the points of interest in Helsinki is free as long as the last point is Porkkala memorial. You must ride any road next to the buildings or in case of dismantled buildings, their former locations mentioned in the map.

You get the stamp from hotel Waskia (Lemmenpolku 3, Vaasa). Stamp will be available 24/7 outside the entrance.

There is no specific control point as long as you enter Vaskiluoto. Proof of arrival, for example, either of the road signs after bridges to the island or hotel Waskia. Time of arrival is when you stamp your card.

Control 3 Tornio

On the Jeppo-Kannus parkour option you may in the towns use roads of your choice. You must ride one of the two parkour options on the way to 3rd control.

You get the stamp from Shell Haparanda (Norra Esplanaden 2, 953 31 Haparanda, Sweden). The gas station shop is open 24/7.

The exact location of control is the sign commemorating Lenin's arrival in the northern wall of Tornio railway station. Time of arrival is when you stamp your card.

Finish Kilpisjärvi

You must ride exactly one parkour option from A to B. You must start at A, meaning you can't ride to A along the parkour, and once finishing you may not ride on or over another parkour. You may leave a parkour for, for example, food or sleep as long as you return to the point where you left the parkour.

You get the stamp from reception of hotel Kilpis (Käsivarrentie 14206, 99490 Kilpisjärvi). Your finish time is your time of arrival to Muotkataikka memorial.

Equipment

You can ride any human-powered 2-3 wheel bike. Of course it has to be street legal and in good shape. Only mandatory pieces of equipment are working front light, red tail light and reflective vest that all must be used during night or in otherwise poor visibility conditions. A clear front light must be attached to the bike, though you may also have extra lights such as a headlamp.

Make yourself familiar with weather conditions on the route. Be prepared for below zero temperatures, long dark nights and rain. How exactly you tackle these obstacles is up to you.

Results

Results will be posted online in three categories. Finishers, late and scratched.

Finishers of Ruska will get a number in order of arrival and they will keep the number for future editions. Numbers 1 to 59 were set between years 2017 and 2022. The first one without a number to finish this year will be number 60.

Should there be riders whose finishing order can't be known, their order will be decided by a coin flip. This is the case when two riders, for example a pair, arrive at the same time.

Rules

If you have been following Ruska or similar events, like the Transcontinental race, the rules should be pretty obvious with a main exception being that any kind of 2-3 wheeled human-powered bikes are allowed. Ruska is not a race, but rules are pretty much the same as in any unsupported race. Here your challenge is not being faster than others, but a race against the clock given the constraints of these rules.

You can read this [article](#) to get a better idea of why there are the rules and what they mean.

1st rule - Ride from start to finish via the mandatory control points

The control points are on the map linked above and in your brevet card. Control points must be ridden in order 1, 2 and 3. Any mandatory parkours must be ridden as instructed.

2nd rule - No 3rd party or private support and resupply

Only resupply and support that is equally available to all riders is allowed. You may not go to your home or your friend's home to get rest or a dinner. You may not have a friend bring you food or spare parts. You may not accept help from strangers, if they try to help you because they know you are riding Ruska.

As most help from strangers likely isn't really going to help you at all, and not accepting it might cause awkward situations, you may accept simple support, like a cup of coffee at a gas station. You should however let everyone know that you received help, for example by posting about it in social media, to avoid ambiguity about the kind of support you are receiving.

In short. Everything during Ruska must happen as if there was no event at all and you didn't have any friends or other contacts on the route.

Online support also counts as private support. Hence you may not, for example, ask a friend or followers to find you a hotel or check how to fix your broken wheel. You may however book the hotel yourself or visit a bike shop on the route and have your wheel fixed, as those services are available to everyone. Or on your own find online instructions about how to fix your wheel.

You may not send any resupply to the route. You must always carry all your equipment with you. So you may not for example leave extra luggage behind while visiting the 3rd control. Also remember that you may not help other riders.

3rd rule - Follow local laws and customs

Should be obvious. You shouldn't have any problem following finnish traffic code as long as you don't try to ride on a highway. If unsure, check details either before or during the ride.

4th rule - No drafting

You may not draft anything you encounter on the route. When you meet other riders you can ride together for a while, but not draft. Any prolonged riding with other participants or other cyclists, as a rule of thumb over 5 minutes, should be avoided.

5th rule - Lights and reflective vest are mandatory

After following traffic laws, having enough rest and a properly maintained bicycle, the best you can do about your safety is being visible and seeing where you are going. If you for any reason don't have lights or vest available during poor visibility you must stop as soon as it is practical.

Eg. You don't have to immediately stop on the road side, but when you find a suitable place to stop you must either fix your lights/vest or stop until it is clear enough to continue. Clear front light and red tail light must be mounted on the bicycle. Make sure that your backpack or other equipment doesn't cover your vest.

6th rule - You are the judge

Try to understand what the rules about self-sufficiency mean and why there are rules in the 1st place. Everyone should have equal opportunity to make it to the finish line. If something happens on the road and you start to think 'is this allowed?' then it probably isn't. Again, if unsure, be open about what happened and tell it publicly.

In addition to being a nice bike ride for participants, the event is a showcase to other riders and followers about how to ride a bike. To see what works and what doesn't. It kind of loses its point, if rules are too strict and limiting.

If you are found to be blatantly breaking the rules to either make it to finish or gain an edge over other riders, you may not only be listed as scratched, but be removed from the Ruska results completely.

7th rule - Stay safe, there is no shame from scratching

Everything you do during Ruska, you could be doing on your own. If you end up in a situation where you think you can't continue then don't. You may still have a nice bike ride to finish after scratching. That won't get any worse from not being on the finisher list.

Accidents happen. You are ill-prepared. Bicycles break. You get lost. Weather conditions get rough. Such is life. Do your best. That is all you've got.

Ruska and self-supported cycling isn't about breaking your limits. It is about finding your limits and working really hard not to break them.