

Oulu must see & do (besides The Ice Tower)

Oulu climbing center, the place for indoor climbing in Oulu. The building is designed by famous Finnish architect Alvar Aalto, originally the building was pulp mill's power station. The opposite boulder hall is drying hall. It was empty for some years before transformed to a very nice climbing venue. There is a sauna at the top floor or the climbing hall, you can watch the lead climbers from the sauna lounge. There is also a hot tub at the balcony. The closing party is held at the climbing center, sauna and hot tub are also warm. There is also an after-comp excursion to the center on Monday, together with local climbing-hold company **Kitka holds** and **creative gym Reenis**.



Oulu cave for drytooling. Oulu cave is a club-operated small boulder cave at Nallisport sports venue. The club is called Oulun cave. They also have possibility for indoor drytooling training. The cave is only accessible with someone local, preferably member or the club, who can show you how to find it, how to protect the pads, how to pay etc. Find it from IG @ouluncave or FB Oulun Cave.

Any outdoor climbing near Oulu? Yes, some boulders but February is too early (you can find them from 27craggs if you are interested). The area around Oulu is too flat for anything higher. For ice and mixed climbing, luckily Finland's best place, **Korouoma canyon** is not too far for a weekend trip. (Or a day trip for people who like driving.) Korouoma deserves a longer description. We are organizing a traditional cooldown event with a local guide Samuli Pekkanen, who knows the canyon really well.

Talking about ice, you can walk (or ski, or bike) on sea ice in Oulu. A good place to go walking is for instance at **Nallikari**. The ice thickness will grow up to 40 cm maximum. <https://cdn.fmi.fi/marine-observations/products/ice-charts/latest-full-color-ice-chart.pdf>. Please note: do not attempt to walk on river ice, or river delta near city center, or Toppila channel. In places with currents and hydropower plant controlling the flow it's not thick enough. Even though you will see ice-fishers near Kuusisaari, do not go there, they know what they do. You might also see people driving car at sea ice to go ice fishing, but we do now recommend trying it.



The sea ice at Nallikari is also a good place to watch for **aurora**. You need a dark place for watching (also around the ice tower it's dark enough). Of course, we cannot guarantee anything, but end of February is a good time to see aurora in Oulu. If the sky is clear, watch out to northern horizon in a dark place late in the evening and you might be able to see it. Check this for the forecast: <https://rwc-finland.fmi.fi/index.php/space-weather-in-finland/>

Statue of Toripolliisi, a fat and kind policeman at the market square. Take a photo with him. Note also that police is called "poliisi" in Finnish (one I), but Oulu dialect has two I-letters. Local lingo sounds relaxed and maybe even a bit slow Finnish. The statue stands at the front door of indoor market hall, drop in if you are hungry.

Paska Kaupunni graffiti at the wall of Uusikatu 22. This is not really spectacular or anything. It's just a sloppy tag at a wall. The graffiti is old, it has been removed thousand times but every time it comes back. It means "shitty town" but it's misspelled. Paska = shit and kaupunki = town. Often you also see it's fixed to more positive impression by adding letters, like paras = best and rakas = most loved. (If you want to continue your art tour at Oulu city, drop in to Valve galleries for free <https://www.kulttuurivalve.fi/en/>)

Winter bike. Oulu is famous for normal people commuting the year round to work, school, grocery store and climbing center etc. The city has well-maintained biking lanes, also in winter the snow is removed quickly especially from main bicycle routes. Ice climbers know how to dress to be warm & not sweat too much while being active in the cold temperatures, in Oulu every granny also does know that. The flatness of Oulu also helps in this sport, no steep up/downhill. But of course, the wind is always opposite. Helmet is often used and lamp is required if it's dark. There are also quite a big community of MTB enthusiasts who keep riding the year round, so you can find a nice network of sleek winter bikes in the forests around the town. Where to get a bike? Ask from your accommodation, many places have bikes for customers and it's also possible to rent one (fatbikes are easier to rent but you can commute with any granny bike really). But remember to lock it, or you will lose it.



Swim at the frozen river Oulujoki. At Tuira beach there is a place for winter swimming. There is no sauna hassle at Tuira beach, you just dip in and come off, so it's a quick and refreshing experience. The freezing temperatures are not to be afraid, but the wind will make you freeze quickly if you are hanging out in your bikinis or speedos. There are warm dressing rooms accessible with key. Without sauna, it's important to have do warm-up before going to swim, so put on enough clothes and have a brisk walk, job or bike before swimming.

Recommended local food experience? It's the warm and freshly made doughnut served at Auran maja will recover your lost calories after the competition weekend. Auran maja is a cross-country skiing center located at Alakyläntie 3km before the Ice Tower. You can see the red building behind a large parking place with lot's of skiers. The volunteers of the ski club bake the doughnut's every day. (Well of course there are some traditional local food for the brave visitors: like rössypottu – a soup made of blood pudding, potatoes and pork.)

What is happening in Oulu? See the city event calendar <https://tapahtumat.munoulu.fi/en-fi>