**Oulu**, with its renowned university, is a great place to pause on your way up north, with a good collection of restaurants and cafés and a pulsing nightlife. On Kirkkokatu, the copper-domed and stuccoed **Tuomiokirkko** seems anachronistic amid the bulky blocks of modern Oulu. Across the small canal just to the north, the **Northern Ostrobothnia Museum** has a large regional collection with a good Sámi section. The few museums are nothing to write home about, but Oulu has won plaudits for its fabulous network of cycling trails, connecting the surrounding islands and woods, including Hietasaari Island with its lovely beach. Pick up a map of them at the tourist office.