

HELSINKI CITY GUIDE - THINGS TO SEE AND DO



See inside for details about Shopping: Activities: Beaches: Nightlife and More

Helsinki

A modern city featuring some of the most distinctive architecture in the world, both old and new, Helsinki is one of the cultural hot spots of Northern Europe. An ideal holiday destination for both for lovers of the arts and those who relish its exciting and vibrant nightlife, Helsinki is also a child-friendly city perfect for family vacations, and being surrounded by forests, lakes and the sea, it is also a haven for outdoor enthusiasts.

Situated on the Baltic Sea, Finland's capital, Helsinki, is a modern city of over half a million people, and is the second most northern capital in Europe. Surrounded by an archipelago of hundreds of tiny islands, and culturally influenced by both the East and West.,



Wide and spacious streets and avenues allow for a multitude of cafes and restaurants to serve outdoors, where you sit back and relax, and at night there is no shortage of bars, clubs and venues to choose from.

Throughout the year, Helsinki offers an incredible variety of activities for people of all ages, whether they prefer challenging sports, or gentle investigations of the natural beauty all around them.

Cruises around the archipelago, trekking in the nearby forests, and traditional Finnish saunas, are some of the more popular

Shopping

Like all Nordic countries, Finland wouldn't be considered as a cheap place for shopping, but for high quality goods it must rank as one of the best in the world. The country has garnered international acclaim in the field of design, and its glassware, homeware, ceramics and furniture are much sought after.

Finns have long had an inherent appreciation and understanding of the cultural importance of art and design. This appreciation is obvious to any visitor to almost any town in Finland, where numerous installations, statues, and monuments abound, and where galleries are almost as plentiful as the stores offering locally fashioned hand-crafted wares.

Marttiini - Made in Finnish Lapland - in the Kiseleff House next to the Senate Square

It all began in 1928 at the land of dark Arctic winters and the midnight sun, when Janne Marttiini decided to establish a knife factory in Finnish Lapland. With the user in mind, he began to create beautiful, high quality utility articles to be used in the harshest conditions imaginable.

But don't let its beauty fool you. The moment you put one to a test you feel the sensation of natural materials like leather, curly birch, reindeer antler, and of course the ultra sharp blade always made from finest steel.

Marttiini knives are still manufactured at the Arctic Circle. They're called "puukko" – the Nordic knife.



Shopping Centres

There are just under 30 shopping centres or malls in Finland, the majority of which are located in and around the Helsinki Metropolitan Region, which includes Espoo and Vantaa. Of these, Itäkeskus has the distinction of being the largest in all the Nordic countries.



In Helsinki city the main shopping malls are **the Forum**, **the Kamppi Centre** which is nearby, the **Kluuvi Centre** and the **Kämp Gallery** which markets to the top end with a range of luxury and designer goods from boutiques.

Further out you'll find **Itäkeskus**, just a 15 minute metro ride in the east of Helsinki, the largest shopping mall in the Nordic countries with almost 240 different shops, including around 30 restaurants and cafés. Further north, in Vantaa, the second largest mall in Finland is the suitably named **Jumbo Shopping Centre**, as is the **Myrmanni Centre**.

Handicrafts and Souvenirs

Finland has long had a reputation for fine craftsmanship and its traditional handicrafts are known throughout the world, particularly that of the indigenous Sámi people whose jewelry is much coveted. The country produces excellent hunting and fishing knives, **handwoven ryijy rugs**, and some of the most delightful pieces of ceramics and glassware you'll ever see.

The Sámi's long tradition of craftsmanship has usually is based on antler, bone, wood, outer birch bark, pewter and leather. Visitors are also charmed by the traditional cups carved from birch wood, known as kuksa.



Genuine handicrafts from Lapland can be identified by the Duodji label which shows that the item has been produced in a regional craft workshop.

There are numerous handicraft shops in Helsinki, most notably in the **Kiseleff House** located just across Senate Square from the cathedral, and in the nearby **Bock House**.

The Kiseleff focuses mostly on Finnish design, such as **Tiia Vanhatapio** and **Lumi Accessories**, whereas the Bock House sells only handicrafts, souvenirs, jewelry and collectibles, almost everything handmade and therefore unique.

Just around the corner is the **Helsinki market square** or **Kauppatori** on the waterfront where you can find lots of stalls selling local and Sámi handicrafts and souvenirs.

Summer Activities and Beaches

When most people think of Finland they picture a cold northern land, home to Santa Claus and his reindeer, and of the snow-bound arctic. However, there is another Finland, one that might come as a surprise to visitors. Although Finland is located in the northeastern corner of Europe, and endures a long and cold winter, it is also blessed with unusually warm summers where daylight lasts just as long as the winter nights.

The beaches play host to many sporting activities and water sports, the surrounding streets provide play parks and terrace cafes, and at night a selection of clubs and bars light the pavements.

Allas Sea Pool - Swimming & Sauna in the heart of Helsinki

Allas Sea Pool is a garden like oasis in the Helsinki harbour with a large outdoor pool area and magnificent saunas. It has both fresh- and sea water pools, complete with saunas and other services. It is situated next to the famous Kauppatori market place in the heart of Helsinki.



There are three swimming pools - the sea water pool, the warm water pool and children's pool.

Warm water pool is filled with heated tap water. The temperature of the water is 28°C all year round. In the Sea Pool you are able to swim comfortably in the Baltic Sea!

Allas Sea Pool also offers three excellent guided sauna experiences: **Winter Sauna**, **Sauna Yoga** and **Finnish Wild Herb Sauna**. Experience the Finnish sauna culture, explore the magic of Finnish wild herbs, learn how to throw "löyly" or practise yoga on the sauna bench!

The Sauna Experience packages include swimming bracelets, private sauna and lounge for two hours, about 40 minutes of guided activities and theme-based, traditional Finnish treats.

Hietaniemi Beach...is a popular sand beach in central Helsinki, Finland. It is located in the Töölö district, next to the Hietaniemi Cemetery and is the most popular beach in central Helsinki.



In the beginning of the 20th century the remote area of Hietaniemi was being used as a landfill and was converted into an area for sand storage. Sand was brought in by barges from the bottom of the sea for a number of years. The sand was never really used but was just left there to spread. In 1929, the locals adopted the area as a sand beach.

Being close to the city centre, the beach is nowadays a popular summer destination for locals and tourists. It is also a popular place for playing beach volleyball.

Eating out

It is a little known fact that Finns drink more coffee per capita than any other nation in the world, consuming an astonishing average of almost 10kg per person annually. As a result, café culture plays a prominent role in Finnish society and wherever you go you'll be sure to find a cosy café.



Cosy Cafe's

Unique is **Relandersgrund**, not only the oldest lightship in Finland but on it's upper deck is a cafe terrace with a sea view!

You'll find it in the heart of Helsinki, near the market square, right beneath the Uspenski Cathedral,

It's open every day:

cafe/terrace 11:00am-9:30pm/1:30am

shop 11:30am-9pm

Other Cafes include:

Strindberg. This high-class establishment located in the city centre not only includes a café but a restaurant with spectacular views of central Helsinki, and even a library bar. **Find it at Pohjoisesplanadi 33.**

Cafe Ekberg: Open since 1852 and still maintaining a classic aesthetic, Ekberg is so popular and famous in the city that it also includes a bakery, pastry shop, and catering service. **Find it at Ekberg 1852 Oy Ab**

Signora Delizia: If you prefer Italian coffee, this specialist deli and coffee shop that has a much more Mediterranean feel to it than the Nordic cafés of Helsinki. Located in a historic building the café sells Italian coffee and food, while the shop sells many Mediterranean products. **Find it at Satamakatu 5, 00160**

The Alexanderinkatu Ciao! Caffè and Wine bar provides the city's best views of Senate Square and the Cathedral. In the evenings the café transforms itself into a Milan-style wine bar-café, where you can enjoy a relaxed atmosphere in the cozy and dignified surroundings of one of Helsinki's oldest buildings. Free wifi is provided for it's patrons.

The wine list places a strong emphasis on Italian, Argentinian and Australian wines. The range is particularly tilted in favour of organic and fair trade wines. During the Milanese wine bar-cafe "happy hour" an antipasto buffet is included in glass prices.

They have a range of savoury delicacies featuring Italian classic such as hot and cold freshly-baked breads filled with the best ingredients on the spot. Your options include: authentic **focaccia, bruschetta, paninis** and **ciabatta**.

Find It at Aleksanterinkatu 28, 00170





Pueblo Bar y Taqueria is a great place to hang out, eat some wonderful Mexican food with Mexican & Latin American cocktails. Great staff, great atmosphere and also hosting some really nice events.

They are the first full blooded taqueria in Helsinki. this is a Mexican restaurant that specialises in tacos, they create other tacos as authentically as possible outside of Mexico.

They bake their own tortillas daily and produce their own salsas and all other dishes out of fresh ingredients. 100% Mexican food made by Mexicans. They make and bake their fresh tortillas daily! Also salsas are never from a can, they're always freshly hand made!

They offer their customers a unique assortment of Mexican beers and tequilas. The bartenders will also make Mexican and Latin American cocktails in order to guarantee an authentic experience.

Nightlife

Conveniently-sized Helsinki has a ton of bars and clubs within walking distance from another. Pick your favourites from and plan your preferred bar crawl around the Finnish capital.

Finns might seem a bit quiet and reserved at first, but meet them in a bar and you'll discover a whole new dimension to the people. Finns love to party, and weekend nights in central Helsinki is where it's most evident.

From sweaty rock shows to classy cocktail lounges, there's enough supply in night-time Helsinki to cater for all preferences. The minimum age for clubs and bars is 18, though some set the minimum age limit at 20, 22 or even 24. Young people are advised to carry ID, as bouncers in bars and clubs strictly observe age restrictions. Entrance to bars is mostly free, but at clubs, a fee is often charged. Counting out special cases, bars stay open until 2 a.m. and clubs until 4 a.m.



Bars

Siltanen: Adjacent to Kuudes Linja in Kallio, it has become the de facto hipster hangout in Helsinki. Food, drinks, good parties, and, at the end of the day, not that much irony. **Find it at Hämeentie 13.**

Bar Bhangra brings a touch of Bollywood to Helsinki in the otherwise quiet Töölö neighbourhood. The interior is a bit over-the-top – intentionally. **Find it at Runeberginkatu 28.**

Night Clubs

Kaiku.... has steadily kept itself at the centre of Helsinki nightlife. Located in an old factory, Kaiku is an intimate 400-person-capacity space located in the heart of the city's cultural district. Spacious dance floor and a lineup of local and international DJs every weekend. **Find it at Kaikukatu 4.**

Jackie.... offers a good selection of beverages and tasty Roman-style pizza makes a great combination. DJs during Fridays and Saturdays. **Find it at Iso Roobertinkatu 21.**



Karaoke Bars

Pataässä.... is a legend among Helsinki karaoke bars, Pataässä ("ace of spades") is where the stage is open for all, and celebrities often swing by to sing a few while painting the town red. **Find it at Snellmaninkatu 13.**

Restroom;.... Everybody sings in the shower, but how about the toilet? Restroom is an ex-public lavatory turned small and cosy karaoke bar in the Punavuori area. **Find it at Tehtaankatu 23.**



Live Music Venues

Tavastia....Finland's number one rock club with great shows on most nights of the week. If an artist doesn't sound good at Tavastia, they won't sound good anywhere else. **Find it at Urho Kekkosen katu 6.**

Korjaamo....A converted tram depot, Korjaamo is a cultural venue that attracts art buffs, rockers and soul fanatics alike, depending on the night and artist. **Find it at Töölönkatu 51.**

Getting There

Helsinki has its own International airport and the following airlines fly there from the UK and Ireland.

[Finnair](#) from Dublin, Edinburgh, London-Heathrow and Manchester.

[Norwegian Air](#) from London-Gatwick.

[Ryanair](#) from London-Stansted.



It's also possible to fly into **Tallinn airport**, in Estonia, then catch the ferry to Helsinki which we can arrange.

Tallinn is the Capital and largest city of Estonia, situated on the northern coast of the country on the shore of the Gulf of Finland; It is also the oldest Capital city in Northern Europe.

The ferry port is less than 4 miles from the airport. There are plenty of crossing available each day. The journey takes around 2 hours. Getting to Helsinki this way quite often works out cheaper.

Here are the airlines that fly there:

[airBaltic](#) from London-Gatwick

[easyJet](#) from London-Gatwick.

[Ryanair](#) from Dublin and London-Stansted.



Know before you go

In Finland the standard voltage is 230 V and the frequency is 50 Hz.

The emergency number (hätänumero) in Finland is 112. Call the emergency number only in genuine emergency situations, when someone's life, health, property or the environment is in danger.

Helsinki Police Department: Tel. 0295 470 011 (Mon-Fri 8am - 4.15 pm)

British Consulate If you need urgent help (for example, you've been attacked, arrested or someone has died), call +358 (0) 9 2286 5100.

Irish Consulate Outside office hours, in case of a genuine consular emergency for Irish citizens in Finland, please call the Embassy's main phone number on +358 9 6824240.

Red Cross Phone 020 701 2000

How can I make a phone call from Finland?

To call a United Kingdom landline or mobile phone from Finland, dial 00 44, then the UK number without its leading zero. For example, the UK number 01632 234567 should be dialled as 00 44 1632 234567 from Finland.

Is smoking prohibited?

In Finland, smoking is prohibited in all enclosed public areas (including public transportation vehicles and buses). It is also not permitted to smoke in health facilities (including outdoor areas that are part of its premises), any educational or training centres (except in outdoor spaces in universities and adult education centres) and playgrounds or play areas (outdoor spaces equipped for children).

Other than cash how else can I pay?

With credit cards: Payment using recognised international credit cards is also commonly available in Finnish shops. They usually have signs indicating this option at the entrance to the establishment. When you make a payment you should show your passport or ID card.

With traveller's cheques: Traveller's cheques, accompanied by a passport, are also accepted in many hotels, restaurants and shops.

How can you go online and check your e-mails?

There is a free hotspot almost everywhere you need one. It's fast enough to allow video calling and HD streaming and it doesn't require a reading of lengthy terms and conditions, nor a password, nor the need to divulge your age, gender, or email address. Helsinki doesn't want your identity, or your money, or your data—indeed the only warning before you hit “accept” is a reminder that public networks are insecure, so be careful out there.

How can I send a letter or a postcard

You can send a letter from anywhere in Finland. In order to do it, you need to find stamps, which you can buy at any Post Office, R kaiski (a chain of convenience stores) and many food shops. To send your letter, put it in a mailbox.

Mailboxes are yellow or blue and can be found in the street, at railway and bus stations, and at the airports. It is also possible to leave your mail in the reception of your hotel, if it offers that service, for the staff to take care of the mailing for you.²

Public Holidays 2022

1st Jan Sat	New Year's Day	5th Jun Sun	Whitsun
6th Jan Thu	Epiphany	24th Jun Fri	Midsummer Eve
		25th Jun Sat	Midsummer Day
15th Apr Fri	Good Friday		
17th Apr Sun	Easter Sunday	5th Nov Sat	All Saints Day
18th Apr Mon	Easter Monday		
		6th Dec Tue	Independence Day
1st May Sun	Vappu	25th Dec Sun	Christmas Day
26th May Thu	Ascension Day	26th Dec Mon	St Stephens Day