

Helsinki Excursion

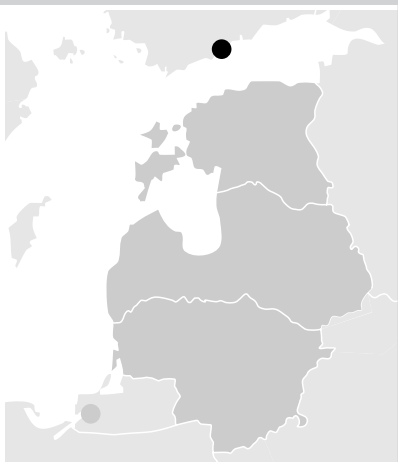
Often called the Daughter of the Baltic, Helsinki has had a long love affair with the Estonian Prince, Tallinn. Historically the two had a tension borne out by centuries of trade rivalry as Helsinki was wooed into the Russian and Swedish empires. Today the two cities have a stable relationship with ferries plying the waters so regularly that Finns almost think of Tallinn as a suburb of Helsinki.

Helsinki has plenty of culture and activities to easily extend that day trip into a week. The fortress of Suomenlinna makes for a historic afternoon's excursion while the bleeding-edge art of Kiasma will let you don a beret and embrace your inner art critic. There's the architectural heritage that stretches beyond Alvar Aalto to include magnificent churches and one of northern Europe's most stunning public squares. And when it's time to rest your weary feet, summer terraces are the best way to take advantage of the long days; or, in winter, cosy up in the famous club scene or gobble some of the best food in the Nordic countries. Or you can keep your hip pocket happy by grazing the Kauppatori (Market square) for Finnish pastries and other local delicacies.

Not that the Finns will be blowing their capital's trumpet. These northern folk are renowned for being quiet – there's an old joke that they invented text messaging so they wouldn't have to speak to one another – but they certainly loosen up after a few drinks. You might have to go easy on shouting drinks, though, as Helsinki prices are the reason those ferry boats are so busy: Finns think of Tallinn as their 'pub suburb'.

FAST FACTS

- **Area** 227,420 sq km
- **Birthplace of** Tove Jansson (Moomin author); Linus Torvalds (Linux creator); Jari Kurri (hockey hall-of-famer)
- **Country** Finland
- **Country code** ☎ 358
- **Departure tax** none
- **Famous for** innovative design, 1952 Olympics, Suomenlinna, saunas
- **Money** euro; US\$1 = €0.76; UK£1 = €1.10
- **Population** 564,521
- **Official language** Finnish, Swedish
- **Visas** not needed for most visitors for stays of up to 90 days



HELSINKI

Pop 564,521 / ☎ 09

Swedish King Gustav Vasa founded Helsinki in 1550 as a rival to the Hansa trading town of Tallinn. He shanghaied merchants and artisans from across Finland for his newly founded Helsingfors (Swedish for Helsinki). During the war of 1808 the Russians captured Helsinki and its theoretically impenetrable fortress, Suomenlinna. They decided that they wanted a capital closer to St Petersburg, so in 1812 they anointed Helsinki; the Finnish city's status survived independence in the 20th century.

Today you'll hear Russian tourists and see Swedish on most signage: Swedish is officially the country's second language (and is often easier to figure out than the vowel-mangling Finnish). Luckily most people working in the city will speak even just a little English. Much of the city's charms are around its port, though frequent cruise-boat arrivals mean it's a buzzing spot. The main sights are all within walking (or cycling if you want to explore further out) distance.

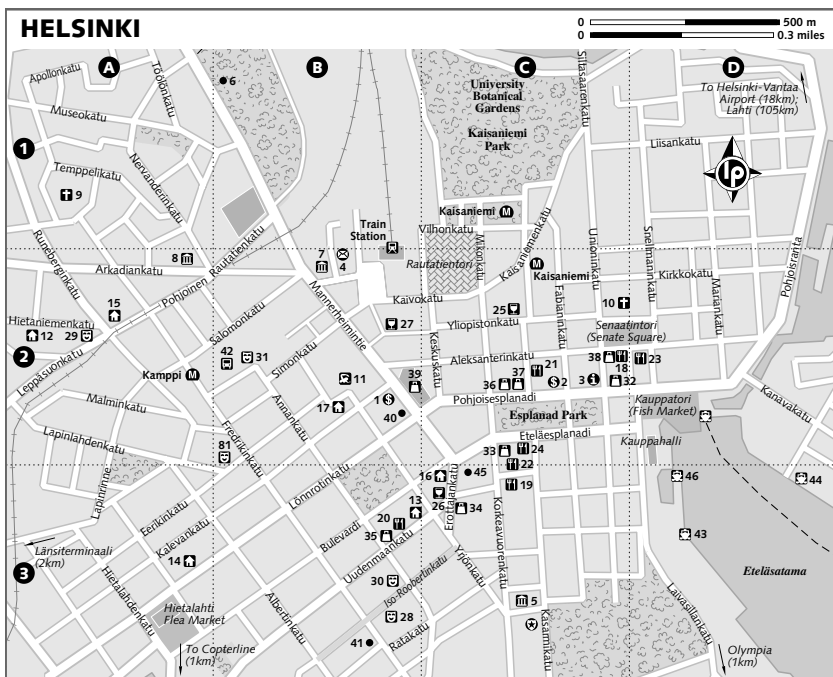
ORIENTATION

Built on a peninsula surrounded by an archipelago of islets, Helsinki is linked together by bridges and ferries. The city itself has two centres around which its transport is based: Rautatietori (Railway square) and Kauppatori (Market square) at the city's port. From Kauppatori, Esplanadi Park runs west with popular strolling streets Eteläesplanadi and Pohjoisesplanadi on either side. Several ferries depart to the islands and Estonia from the port.

INFORMATION

If you're seeing a few sights and want to use the city's public transport, the **Helsinki Card** (☎ 2288 1200; www.helsinkicard.fi; 24/48/72hr adult €33/43/53, child €11/14/17) is the ideal option, available at the city tourist office or at hotels and transport terminals.

Forex (www.forex.fi; ☎ 8am-9pm Jun-Aug, 8am-7pm Mon-Sat Sep-May) Mannerheimintie (Mannerheimintie 10); Pohjoisesplanadi (Pohjoisesplanadi 23) Has good exchange rates, with a flat €2 fee on travellers cheques and no commission. There are other offices at the train station and along Pohjoisesplanadi.



Helsinki City Tourist Office (☎ 169 3757; www.hel.fi/tourism; Pohjoisesplanadi 19; ☹ 9am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm Sat & Sun May-Sep, 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun Oct-Apr) Busy multilingual office with a great quantity of information on the city.

Helsinki Expert (www.helsinkiexpert.fi) Book hotel rooms and purchase tickets for train, bus and ferry travel around Finland and for travel to Tallinn and St Petersburg. Also sells Helsinki Card and is located in the tourist office.

Main post office (☎ 020-451 4400; Mannerheimin aukio 1; ☹ 7am-9pm Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat & Sun) The post office is in the large building between the bus and train stations with the poste restante office adjacent.

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Just a 15-minute ferry ride from Kauppatori, **Suomenlinna** ('fortress of Finland') is the must-do half-day trip from the city. Set on a tight cluster of islands, this Unesco World Heritage site has been hotly contested real estate ever since the Swedes built here in 1748 to stave off Russian attacks, naming their bastion Sveaborg (Swedish fortress). Of course the Russians took the fort in 1808 and it remained in Russian hands until independence. Ironically, during the Finnish Civil War it served as a prison for communist prisoners.

Suomenlinna actually spans two islands: Iso Mustaari in the north and Susisaari in the south, which are connected by a small bridge. Most visits to the island begin at the bridge with the **Inventory Chamber Visitor Centre** (☎ 668 800; www.suomenlinna.fi; ☹ 10am-6pm May-Sep, walking tours 11am & 2pm Jun-Aug), which has tourist information, maps and guided walking tours

HELSINKI ON A HANDSET

Packed your mobile or cell phone? Helsinki Tourism has a cut-down version of its tourism site designed to be delivered to your mobile at www.helsinki.mobi.

(€6.50; free with a Helsinki Card) in summer. You can also hop off at the King's Gate Quay on Suisaari, if you want to explore for yourself. There's a blue-signposted walking path that takes in the islands' several museums and cafes.

For a more modern take, in the city centre you'll find the quirky curves of **Kiasma** (Museum of Contemporary Art; ☎ 1733 6501; www.kiasma.fi; Mannerheiminaukio 2; adult/under 18yr €7/free; ☹ 10am-8.30pm Wed-Sun, 9am-5pm Tue), a contemporary art space that still surprises with exciting new exhibits. Focusing on the left of field, it has a permanent collection on the 3rd floor and an experimental theatre with a changing program (tickets usually cost extra) on the ground floor, which is known for the hand-written clock outside the artsy museum shop. The building has become a meeting point for artists as well as drinkers on its popular terrace, who look out on the horseback figure of the **Mannerheim statue**.

The **Design Museum** (☎ 622 05421; www.designmuseum.fi; Korkeavuorenkatu 23; adult/child €7/free; ☹ 11am-6pm Tue-Sun, plus Mon Jun-Aug, 11am-8pm Tue Sep-May) has a permanent collection that looks at the uniqueness of Finnish design,

INFORMATION		Klaus K.....	16 C3	SHOPPING 📦	
Forex.....	1 B2	Sokos Hotel Tornil.....	17 B2	Aarikka.....	32 C2
Forex.....	2 C2	EATING 🍴		Artek.....	33 C2
Helsinki City Tourist Office.....	3 C2	Cafe Engel.....	18 C2	Design Forum Finland.....	34 C3
Helsinki Expert.....	(see 3)	Chez Dominique.....	19 C3	IvanaHelsinki.....	35 B3
Main Post Office.....	4 B2	Demo.....	20 B3	Marimekko.....	36 C2
SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES		Fazer.....	21 C2	Moomin Shop.....	37 C2
Design Museum.....	5 C3	Olo.....	22 C2	Sauna Market.....	38 C2
Finlandia Talo.....	6 B1	Savotta.....	23 D2	Stockmann.....	39 B2
Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art.....	7 B2	Savoy.....	24 C2	TRANSPORT	
Mannerheim Statue.....	(see 7)	DRINKING 🍷		Eckerö Line.....	40 B2
Natural History Museum.....	8 A2	Arctic Icebar.....	25 C2	Greenbike.....	41 B3
Tempelliaukio Church.....	9 A1	Ateljee Bar.....	(see 17)	Kamppi Bus Station (Underground).....	42 B2
Tuomiokirkko.....	10 C2	Cubal Cafe.....	26 C3	Kanava Ferry Terminal.....	(see 43)
Yrjönkadun Uimahalli.....	11 B2	Zetor.....	27 B2	Katajanokka Ferry Terminal.....	(see 44)
SLEEPING 🛏		ENTERTAINMENT 🎬		Linda Line.....	(see 43)
Academica Summer Hostel.....	12 A2	DTM.....	28 B3	Makasiini Ferry Terminal.....	43 D3
Hostel Erottajanpuisto.....	13 B3	Heavy Corner.....	29 A2	Nordic Jet Line.....	44 D3
Hotel Linna.....	14 A3	Lost & Found.....	30 B3	Tallink.....	45 C3
Hotelli Helka.....	15 A2	LUX.....	31 B2	Viking Line.....	46 D3

particularly the recent Fennofolk movement. Changing exhibitions focus on contemporary design – everything from clothing to household furniture.

Recently renovated, the **Natural History Museum** (Luonnontieteellinen Museo; ☎ 1912 8800; www.fnnh.helsinki.fi; Pohjoinen Rautatiekatu 13; adult/child €5/2.50; 🕒 9am–5pm Tue–Fri, 11am–4pm Sat & Sun) is known for its controversial weather vane of a sperm impregnating an ovum. New exhibitions like the Story of the Bones, which puts skeletons in an evolutionary context, bring new life to the University of Helsinki's extensive collection of mammals, birds and other creatures, including all Finnish species. The dinosaur skeletons and the saggy African elephant in the foyer are hits with kids.

One of the finest creations of German architect CL Engel is the **Senaatintori** (Senate Square), a magnificent city square. It's dominated by the chalk-white neoclassical **Tuomiokirkko** (Lutheran cathedral; ☎ 709 2455; Unioninkatu 29; 🕒 9am–6pm Mon–Sat, noon–6pm Sun Sep–May, 9am–midnight Jun–Aug); as it was not completed until 1852, Engel himself never saw its majesty as he died in 1840. Given the Lutheran sensibilities, it was created to serve as a reminder of God's supremacy over the square. Its high flight of stairs, however, is a popular meeting place for canoodling couples and a setting for New Year's revelry. The interior features statues of the Reformation heroes Luther, Melancthon and Michael Agricola and, true to their ideals, there is little other ornamentation under the lofty dome.

Hewn into solid rock, **Tempelisaari Church** (☎ 494 698; Lutherinkatu 3; 🕒 10am–8pm Mon–Fri, 10am–6pm Sat, noon–1.45pm & 3.30–6pm Sun) was designed by Timo and Tuomo Suomalainen in 1969 and remains one of Helsinki's foremost attractions. The church symbolises the modern innovativeness of Finnish religious architecture and features a stunning 24m-diameter roof covered in 22km of copper stripping. There are regular concerts, with great acoustics. The entrance is at the northern end of Fredrikinkatu.

A little further out on Mannerheimintie is one of Alvar Aalto's most famous works, the angular **Finlandia Talo** (☎ visiting info 40241, box office 402 4400; Mannerheimintie 13; guided tours €6), a concert hall built in 1971. Opening hours depend on events; ring for information.

Everyone will tell you that you haven't been to Finland unless you've had a sauna. The

Yrjönkadun Uimahalli (☎ 3108 7401; Yrjönkatu 21; admission €4–11; 🕒 men 6.30am–9pm Tue, Thu & Sat, women noon–9pm Sun & Mon, 6.30am–9pm Wed & Fri) is one of the more historic options in a sleek Art Deco complex first opened in 1928.

SLEEPING

Budget options are rare in Helsinki, but fortunately there are some excellent *kesahotellis* (summer hostels) that are available from June to August.

Academica Summer Hostel (☎ 1311 4334; www.hostelacademica.fi; Hietaniemenkatu 14; dm €23, standard s/tw up to €42/59, modern s/tw up to €55/69; 🕒 Jun–Aug; ☒ ☑ ☒ ☐) One of the best hostels, this definitely doesn't feel like a student sharehouse. It's super-clean and packed with features (pool, sauna and wi-fi). Traditional rooms are older, but still have great additions like bar fridges and en-suite bathrooms. Dorms are limited to four bunks to a room so even the cheapest feel uncrowded. Management is also environmentally aware, with a carbon offset program and a WWF-certified green office.

Hostel Erottajanpuisto (☎ 642 169; www.erottajanpuisto.com; Uludenmaankatu 9; dm/s/d/tr €23.50/49/68/81; ☒ ☑ ☒ ☐) An excellent central option if you're on a tight budget. In the thick of the happening Punavouri area, it's a social spot with a large drawing room that doubles as a basic kitchen where free coffee is always brewing. Dorms are limited to eight bunks to a room though singles are a good chance to escape the party people.

our pick Hotelli Helka (☎ 613 580; www.helka.fi; Pohjoinen Rautatiekatu 23a; s/d up to €136/171, weekends & summer €90/112; ☒ ☑ ☒ ☐) If you're into Finnish design, you'll love this hip hotel with renovated rooms decked out in chocolate browns and wheat tones. Every room has a print of an autumn forest hanging over it that's backlit to give rooms a moody glow – daunting but delicious. Keitto (kitchen) is the restaurant which serves a generous buffet breakfast. Bikes can be hired (€15).

Hotel Linna (☎ 010-344 4100; www.palace.fi; Lönnrotinkatu 29; s/d up to €130/119, weekends up to €130/250; ☐ ☒ ☑ ☒) For your own castle, this fits the bill: Linna is Finnish for 'castle'. The turreted facade and courtly service give you the royal treatment, although this place was only built in 1903 as the student clubhouse for the technical university opposite. The castle decor never feels cheesy; rooms are tastefully kitted out with extra-long beds, minibars and, in

some rooms, bathtubs. There's a choice of three saunas; wi-fi is available (€12 per day).

Klaus K (☎ 020-770 4700; www.klauskhotel.com; Bulevardi 2; s/d from €140/180; 📺) The swankiest option in town is definitely this designer hotel. It's easily the slickest of the new generation of Helsinki hotels, with *Kalevala* (Finland's national epic) quotes woven into the gold walls of the lobby and the thread running onto a framed verse in every room. It's distinctly Finnish, from luxurious birch-scented toiletries to space-conscious architecture to the corrugated sauna-style roofs of bathrooms. But there are worldly comforts like high-speed wi-fi and DVDs in all rooms, plus two good restaurants and a frostily cool bar.

Sokos Hotel Tornii (☎ 020-1234 604; www.sokoshotels.fi; Yrjönkatu 26; s/d €220/250, weekends €105/115; 📺) In 1931 'Finland's Empire State Building' was built as the tallest structure in Helsinki and has become Sokos Hotel Tornii. Although no longer the country's tallest building, it still boasts excellent views, especially from Ateljee Bar (see p172). Now rooms have been stylishly renovated in keeping with the historic feel, in art deco and Art Nouveau style, though modern rooms in rich red and black have hip decor. Each room has its own guestbook filled with glowing comments.

EATING

Fazer (☎ 6159 2959; Kluuvikatu 3; sandwiches €7-8, pies €9-10; 📺 7.30am-10pm Sun-Fri, 9am-10pm Sat) This classic cafe can feel a little cavernous, but it's the flagship for Finland's mighty chocolate empire of the same name. There are sandwiches a-plenty, but it's one of the better places to buy Fazer confectionery or to enjoy towering sundaes or slabs of cake.

ourpick Cafe Engel (☎ 652 776; Senaatintori; meals €10-18; 📺 8am-10pm Mon-Fri, 9am-10pm Sat, 10am-10pm Sun) This heavenly spot in the Senaatintori hums with both tourists and university students alike. There's always a good selection of cakes and enticing meals often of a vegetarian bent (such as a beetroot lasagne). It's a cultural hub with films shown in the courtyard during summer, irregular piano recitals and a plump English-language magazine selection.

Savotta (☎ 7425 5588; Aleksanterinkatu 22; mains €16-25; 📺 11am-11pm Mon-Fri, 1-11pm Sat & Sun) This representation of a logger's mess hall offers traditional Finnish working food. Waitresses

in peasant tops bring *karjalanpiirakka* (Karelian pies) as starters before moving on to meaty fare like elk, bear stew or the Forest Foreman's Plate which is a carnivore's sampler served in a skillet. If you enter into the spirit of things, it can be a top night out.

Demo (☎ 228 90840; www.restaurantdemo.fi; Uudenmaankatu 9-11; mains €19-25, set menu €48-52; 📺 4-11pm Tue-Sat) A favourite with Helsinki's chefs, this fashionable spot does modern European food such as artichoke ravioli or roasted goose breast at affordable prices. The location means it attracts bright young things who delight in the liquorice ice cream or rhubarb sorbets.

Savoy (☎ 6128 5300; Eteläesplanadi 14; mains €36-58; 📺 lunch & dinner Mon-Fri) Originally designed by Alvar and Aino Aalto, this is definitely a stand-out dining room with blondewood and Artek furniture throughout. Dishes source the best in local ingredients with an eye on sustainability and conserving your food miles, with highlights such as roasted partridge with duck liver. It's proof that green grub doesn't have to be all alfalfa sprouts and mashed yeast.

Chez Dominique (☎ 612 7393; www.chezdominique.fi; Rikhardinkatu 4; mains €45-50, set menus €99-139; 📺 lunch & dinner Tue-Fri, dinner Sat, closed Jul) Helsinki's best French restaurant has moved to a larger location but has maintained its pair of Michelin stars. The menu sticks to French classics such as Dover sole and Anjou pigeon with Finnish flourishes; set menus (from four to nine courses) include a divine *pulla*, a Finnish pastry.

Olo (☎ 665 565; www.olo-restaurant.com; Kasarmikatu 44; mains €75-38; 📺 lunch Mon-Fri, dinner Tue-Sat) A relative newcomer on the fine-dining scene, Olo is refreshingly unpretentious with a dining room of muted greys and whites. The menu is playful Finnish with a saddle of lamb sauced with Madeira and forest mushrooms or tender piglet. All meals come with house-baked breads (try the fruity malt) and a wine list broad enough to appeal to all palates.

The **Kauppahalli** (covered market; Eteläranta; 📺 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 8am-4pm Sat) was built in 1889 and remains one of the country's best markets, with good snacks and produce to graze on. The always-busy Kauppatori is good for grilled salmon, cheap snacks and fresh produce such as berries in summer. Most food stalls set up plastic chairs and tables on summer afternoons – which are besieged by seagulls.

DRINKING

Finns like a drink and there's no shortage of places to slake your thirst. Look out for summer terraces that spill out onto the pavements and rooftops of Helsinki when the weather's good. In autumn terrace bars will often bring out blankets and heaters to stretch the outdoor season.

Zetor (☎ 010-766 4450; www.ravintolazetor.fi; Mannerheimintie 3-5; ☎ 11am-4am Sat, 3pm-1am Sun & Mon, 3pm-3am Tue, 3pm-4am Wed & Thu) Ever wondered where the Leningrad Cowboys would park their pointy shoes? This kooky restaurant and pub (mains €10 to €22) has a kitschy Czech tractor theme from the mind of Finnish film-maker Aki Kaurismäki. Food like cabbage rolls, salmon soup and other traditional dishes compliment the Finnish booze (including *sahti*, a traditional ale flavoured with juniper berries), but ease off if you're finishing the night with a tractor ride.

Arctic Icebar (☎ 278 1855; Yliopistonkatu 5; admission €10; ☎ 10pm-4am Wed-Sat) Not cold enough outside? Then try this bar that's literally carved out of ice (that includes tables and the bar). It's -5°C so you'll need the furry cape you're offered on entry and the complimentary warming drink included in the price. There's a minimum age of 24. It's above La Bodega.

Cuba! Cafe (☎ 050-505 0425; www.cubacafe.fi; Erottajankatu 4; ☎ 5pm-2am Sun-Thu, 5pm-4am Fri & Sat) Certainly one of Helsinki's brighter bars, this place is done out in peach and mojito limes with a small stage that features a Havana-style taxi and DJs or salsa bands. Beers, cocktails and dancing are the order of the night in this party place.

Ateljee Bar (Sokos Hotel Torni, Yrjönkatu 26; ☎ 2pm-2am Mon-Thu, noon-2am Fri & Sat, 2pm-1am Sun) It's worth the climb up to this tiny perch on the roof of the Sokos Hotel Torni for the city panorama. Taking the lift to the 12th floor is the best option, then there's a narrow winding staircase to the top.

ENTERTAINMENT

Helsinki has a buzzing club culture with new places popping up all the time. Nightclubs have varying minimum-age restrictions (some as high as 24 years old) so check websites before hitting the town.

LUX (☎ 020-775 9350; www.luxnightclub.fi; Urho Kekkonen katu 1a; door charge €5-10; ☎ 10pm-4am Wed-Sat) Ascend into clubbing heaven at this super-slick club with stellar lighting. Its position on

top of Kamppi (one of the biggest shopping complexes) means brilliant views and high-altitude cocktails. Music runs from sexy lounge to sweaty funk with local DJs and international visitors. Enter via Kamppi Sq.

DTM (Don't Tell Mama; ☎ 676 315; www.dtm.fi; Iso Roobertinkatu 28; door charge €2-10; ☎ 9am-4am Mon-Sat, noon-4am Sun; ☎) Scandinavia's biggest gay club is a multilevel complex with an early-opening cafe-bar (admission free). A couple of club areas open at 9pm (minimum age 22) and there are regular club nights as well as drag shows or women-only sessions.

Lost & Found (☎ 680 1010; www.lostandfound.fi; Annankatu 6; ☎ evening only) You can skip the bar upstairs and head to the dark grotto-like dance floor downstairs that's decked out in luminescent designs. Still a gay venue (it styles itself as a 'hetero-friendly gay club'), the tunes are often chart-based with a sign near the DJ booth, 'Don't request. I'll play it eventually.' It's often the spot for after-parties following big gigs.

Heavy Corner (☎ 458 4309; www.heavycorner.com; Hietaniemenkatu 2; ☎ 6pm-late Wed-Sat) Metal is huge in Finland and this club is the place to hear the rockiest tunes and often metal karaoke, featuring super-serious patrons who believe they are auditioning for Metallica. Wear anything other than black here and they'll know you're a tourist.

SHOPPING

Helsinki is known for design, from fashion to the latest furniture and homewares. By wandering along Pohjoisesplanadi, the main tourist street in town, you'll find most of the big name places, though the Punavuori has hipper designers and boutiques. Look out for the black-and-white sticker of **Design District Helsinki** (www.designdistrict.fi).

Design Forum Finland (☎ 6220 810; www.designforum.fi; Erottajankatu 7; ☎ 10am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat, noon-6pm Sun) A good place to start tracking down innovative craft, this place operates a shop that hosts many designers' works.

Aarikka (☎ 652 277; www.aarikka.fi; Pohjoisesplanadi 27; ☎ 10am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Fri) Specialising in wood, Aarikka is known for its distinctly Finnish jewellery.

Artek (☎ 6132 5277; www.artek.fi; Eteläesplanadi 18) Originally founded by Alvar Aalto and his wife Aino, this homewares, glassware and furniture store maintains the simple design principle of its founders.

Marimekko (☎ 686 0240; www.marimekko.fi; Pohjoisesplanadi 31) Finland's most celebrated designer fabrics, including warm florals and hipper new designs, are available here as shirts, dresses, bags, sheets and almost every other possible application.

IvanaHelsinki (☎ 622 4422; www.ivanahelsinki.fi; Uudenmaankatu 15; ☎ 11am-7pm Mon-Fri, 11am-4pm Sat) Currently the coolest label with its own Fennofolk style, it has to-die-for dresses and T-shirts that deftly play with Finnish icons.

Moomin Shop (☎ 622 2206; Kämp Galleria, Pohjoisesplanadi 33; ☎ 10am-8pm Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat) Stock up on all things related to Finland's most-loved children's characters, the Moomins, including books in English and Finnish.

Sauna Market (☎ 278 5051; Aleksanterinkatu 26-28; ☎ 10am-6pm) Gather sauna oils, back-scrubbers, water ladles and hundreds of other accoutrements for your own sauna.

Stockmann (☎ 1211; Aleksanterinkatu 52) Helsinki's 'everything store' does a good line of Finnish souvenirs and Sámi handicrafts, as well as Finnish textiles, Kalevala Koru jewellery, Lapponia jewellery, Moomintroll souvenirs and lots more.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Air

There are flights to Helsinki from the USA, Europe and Asia on many airlines. **Finnair** (☎ reservations 0600 140 140; www.finnair.fi; Asema-aukio 1; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Sat) and its subsidiaries offer international as well as domestic services, with flights to 20 Finnish cities – generally at least once a day. Budget carriers **Blue1** (☎ 0600 25831; www.blue1.com) and **Finncomm** (☎ 4243 2003; www.fc.fi) have budget flights to some Finnish and international destinations. The airport is in the satellite city of Vantaa, 19km north of Helsinki.

Until Copterline suspended services in late 2008 (a victim of the global financial crisis), the quickest way to Tallinn was by helicopter. **Copterline** (☎ 0200 18181; www.copterline.com; Hernesaari helicopter terminal, Hernematalankatu 2b) flew from Helsinki to Tallinn (one way €98, hourly 7am to 8pm Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm Saturday, 10am to 4pm Sunday) in a zippy 18 minutes. There is a chance that services will resume in the future – check the website.

Boat

International ferries travel to Tallinn and on to Stockholm. There is also a regular catamaran and hydrofoil service to Tallinn.

Four of the five ferry terminals are just off Kauppatori: Kanava and Katajanokka terminals are served by bus 13 and trams 2, 2V and 4; and Olympia and Makasiini terminals by trams 3B and 3T. The last terminal, Länsiterminalaali (West Terminal), is served by bus 15.

Ferry tickets may be purchased at the terminal, from a ferry company's office (and often its website) or, in some cases, from the city tourist office. Book in advance during the high season (late June to mid-August).

Some ferry company offices in Helsinki:

Eckerö Line (☎ 228 8544; www.eckeroline.fi; Mannerheimintie 10, Länsiterminalaali) Runs *Nordlandia* car ferry, which sails daily to Tallinn (adult/car from €19/21, three to 3½ hours) year-round.

Linda Line (☎ 668 9700; www.lindaliini.ee; Makasiini terminal) Small passenger-only hydrofoil company plying the waters to Tallinn (adult from €19, 1½ hours), with up to seven trips daily (when waters are ice-free).

Nordic Jet Line (☎ 681 770; www.njl.info; Kanava terminal) Runs two catamarans, *Nordic Jet* and *Baltic Jet*, to Tallinn (adult/car from €28/35, 1¼ hours) sailing from May to September or later (depending on the weather) with seven daily crossings.

Tallink (☎ 2282 1222; www.tallinksilja.com; Erottajankatu 19) Runs at least five services from Kanava terminal to Tallinn (adult/vehicle one way from €23/20, two to 3½ hours) on high-speed *Star* and *Superstar* or the slower *Baltic Princess*. Also serves Rostock (Germany) and Stockholm (Sweden).

Viking Line (☎ 123 577; www.vikingline.fi; Mannerheimintie 14) Operates car ferry *Rosella* to Tallinn (adult/car from €19/18, 2½ hours) from Katajanokka and Makasiini terminals.

Bus

Purchase long-distance and express bus tickets at **Kamppi Station** (Frederikinkatu; ☎ 7am-7pm Mon-Fri, 7am-5pm Sat, 9am-6pm Sun) or on the bus itself. Buses run to destinations throughout Finland and internationally to Russia.

Train

The **train station** (rautatieasema) is in the city centre and is linked by pedestrian subway with Helsinki's metro. Helsinki is the terminus for Finland's three main railway lines so you can get to anywhere in Finland from here.

There is a separate ticket counter for international trains, including the ones that go to St Petersburg (€62, 6½ hours), Moscow (€92, 13 hours) and Vyborg (€42, four hours). In 2010 a new high-speed train is scheduled to St Petersburg, but at the time of research no ticketing information was available.

GETTING AROUND

Bicycle

With a flat inner city and well-marked cycling paths, Helsinki is ideal for cycling. Get hold of a copy of the Helsinki cycling map at the tourist office. The city provides 300 distinctive green 'City Bikes' at stands within a radius of 2km from Kauppatori. The bikes are free: you deposit a €2 coin into the lockable stand, then reclaim it when you return it to any stand.

For something more sophisticated, **Greenbike** (☎ 8502 2850; www.greenbike.fi; Fredrikinkatu 31; bikes per day/24hr/week from €15/20/60; 🕒 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat, 10am-2pm Sun) rents out quality bikes including 24-speed hybrid mountain bikes.

Car & Motorcycle

Parking in Helsinki is strictly regulated and can be a big headache. Metered areas in the city centre cost €3 per hour during the week, but are free on weekends. There are undercover car parks in Kampii and Forum; for other locations consult the *Parking Guide for the Inner City of Helsinki*, a free map available at the city tourist office.

Public Transport

Central Helsinki is easy to get around on foot or by bicycle but there's also a metro line and a

reasonably comprehensive transport network. The city's public transport system, **Helsingin Kaupungin Liikennelaitos** (HKL; ☎ 310 1071; www.hkl.fi), operates buses, metro and local trains, trams and a ferry to Suomenlinna. A one-hour flat-fare ticket for any HKL transport costs €2.20 when purchased on board, €2 when purchased in advance. A single tram ticket is €2 full fare. Tourist tickets (one/three/five days €6/12/18) are the best option if you're in town for a short time. Alternatively, the Helsinki Card (see p168) gives you free travel anywhere within Helsinki.

HKL ferries to Suomenlinna (see p169) depart from the passenger quay at Kauppatori (return €3.80, 15 minutes, three times hourly, 6.20am to 2.20am). Tickets are available at the pier. **JT-Lines** (☎ 534 806; www.jt-line.fi) runs an hourly waterbus from Kauppatori to Suomenlinna (return €5.50, 30 minutes), 8am to 7pm from mid-May to August.

HKL offices (🕒 7.30am-7pm Mon-Thu, 7.30am-5pm Fri, 10am-3pm Sat) at the Kamppi bus station and the Rautatietori and Hakaniemi metro stations sell tickets and passes, as do many of the city's R-kioskis. Metro services run daily from about 6am to 11.30pm. The metro line extends to Ruoholahti in the western part of the city and northeast to Mellunmäki and Vuosaari.

Taxi

You can hail cabs on the street or join a queue at one of the taxi stands located at the train station, bus station or Senaatintori. Alternatively, phone for a cab on ☎ 0100 0700.