



# Helsinki Excursion

📍 358 / POP 1 MILLION

## Includes ➔

Sights.....	182
Activities.....	183
Tours.....	185
Festivals & Events.....	185
Sleeping.....	186
Eating.....	186
Drinking & Nightlife.....	188
Entertainment.....	188
Shopping.....	189
Understand Helsinki.....	189
Survival Guide.....	190

## Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Hotelli Helka (p186)
- ➔ GLO Hotel Kluuvi (p186)
- ➔ Hotel Finn (p186)
- ➔ Hostel Academica (p186)

## Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Olo (p187)
- ➔ A21 Dining (p187)
- ➔ Skiffer (p187)

## Why Go?

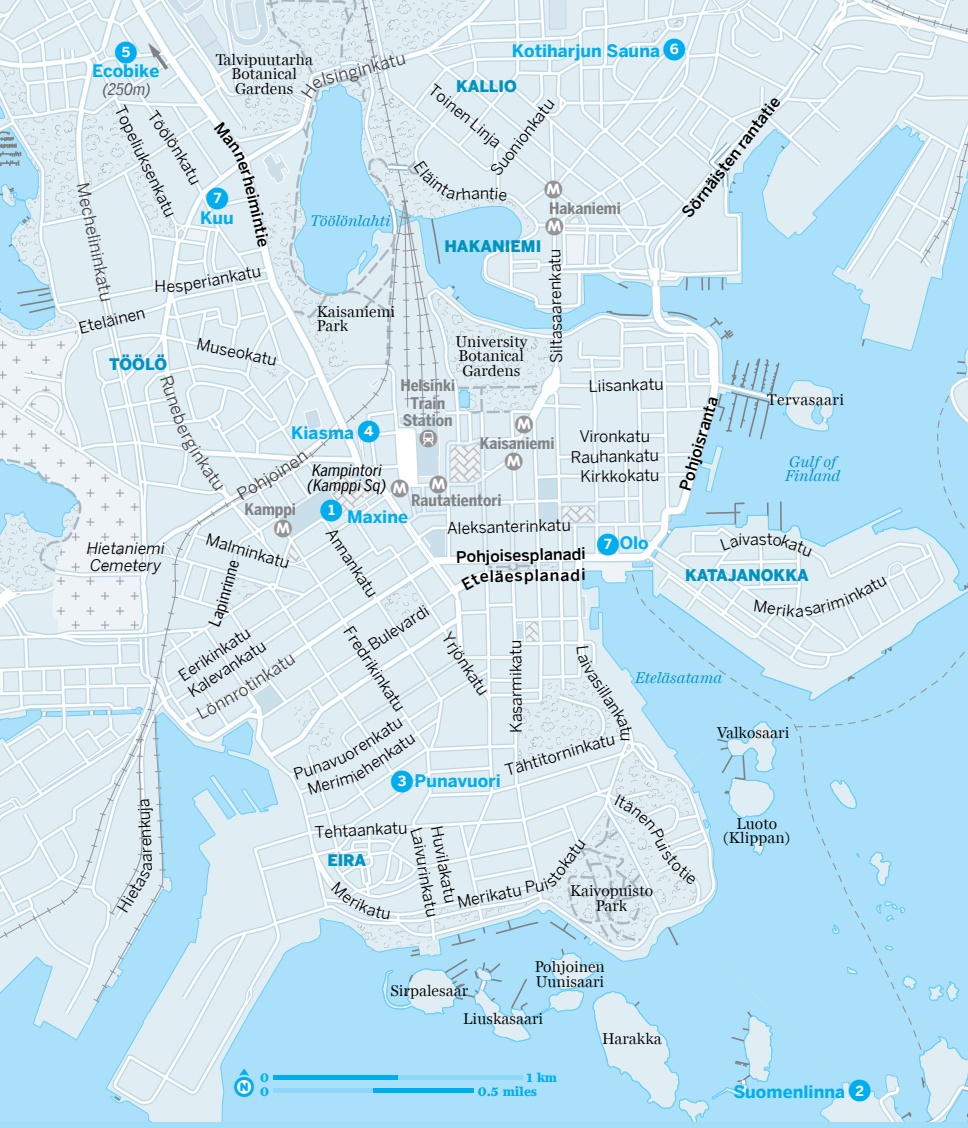
At the neck of the Gulf of Finland bottle (for that's how it looks on the map), two capitals – Helsinki and Tallinn – face each other like two old mates who need no one else for company. The 90km separating them can be covered in two hours and an armada of boats is ready to assist you in this not-so-daring accomplishment.

In every respect as Baltic as the three east Baltic capitals, Helsinki boasts an exceptionally scenic setting. It is an archipelago as much as a city, so sea views will accompany you wherever you go when exploring this modern, stylish megalopolis, obsessed with design and hovering at the top of the world's urban livability index.

It is also an interesting historical comparison, for Finland had every chance of repeating the fate of Baltic states, but unlike them it repelled the Soviet invasion in 1939 and stayed free. Now you can see the difference it has made.

## When to Go

- ➔ Helsinki has year-round appeal; there's always something going on.
- ➔ The summer kicks off in June, when terraces sprout outside every cafe and bar, and the nights seem never to end.
- ➔ There's a bit of a lull in July when Finns head off to their summer cottages, but in August the capital is repopulated and plenty of activities are on offer.
- ➔ If you feel like seeing the wintry side of town, go in December, when you can ice skate and absorb the Christmassy atmosphere before temperatures get too extreme.



## Helsinki Highlights

1 After a few sundowners at **Maxine** (p188), descend into the weekend maelstrom of Helsinki's pubs and bars.

2 Grab a picnic and explore the fortress island of **Suomenlinna** (p182), which guarded Helsinki harbour.

3 Browse the huge range of design shops in **Punavuori** (p189).

4 Select from the city's huge range of museums and galleries such as **Kiasma** (p182) for great contemporary art.

5 Check out **Ecobike** (p190) and take advantage

of the network of cycle paths to explore on two wheels.

6 Sweat out your cares in the traditional, atmospheric **Kotiharjun Sauna** (p183).

7 Dine on traditional Finnish food such as meatballs or liver and mash, or experiment with Modern Suomi cuisine at **Olo** (p187) or **Kuu** (p187).