



Finland

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Best Places to Eat

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Best Places to Stay

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Why Go?

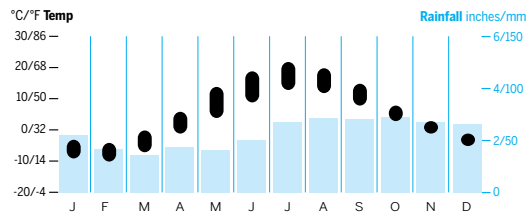
There's something pure, vital and exciting in the Finnish air; an invitation to get out and active year-round. How about a post-sauna dip through the ice under the majestic aurora borealis (Northern Lights), after whooshing across the snow behind a team of huskies, for an inspiring winter's day? Hiking or canoeing under the midnight sun through pine forests populated by wolves and bears isn't your typical tanning-oil summer either.

Although socially and economically in the vanguard of nations, large parts of Finland remain gloriously remote; trendsetting modern Helsinki is counterbalanced by vast forested wildernesses.

Nordic peace in lakeside cottages, summer sunshine on convivial beer terraces, avant-garde design, dark melodies and cafes with home-baking aromas are other facets of Suomi seduction. As are the independent, loyal and welcoming Finns, who do their own thing and are much the better for it.

When to Go

Helsinki



Mar & Apr There's still plenty of snow, but enough daylight to enjoy winter sports.

Jul Everlasting daylight, countless festivals and discounted accommodation.

Sep The stunning *ruska* (autumn colours) season make this prime hiking time up north.

1 Immerse yourself in harbourside **Helsinki**, creative melting pot for the latest in Finnish design and nightlife.

2 Marvel at the shimmering lake-scapes of handsome **Savonlinna** (p352), and watch top-quality opera in its medieval castle.

4 Cross the Arctic Circle, hit up the awesome Arktikum museum, and visit Santa in his grotto at **Rovaniemi** (p354).