



West Coast

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Why Go?

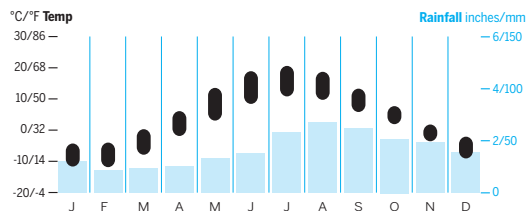
The West Coast offers 500km of charming seashore, along with historic towns and fantastic summer festivals. Tiny Kaustinen hosts the north's biggest folk-music affair, and hardworking Seinäjoki and Pori let their hair down at huge rock, tango and jazz festivals.

Heading north from Turku, the coast is lined with venerable old wooden towns like Uusikaupunki, Kristinestad and Unesco-recognised Rauma, founded at the height of the Swedish empire. The western shore still shares more with neighbouring Sverige (Sweden) than Suomi. Newsstands are packed with Swedish gossip magazines, Stockholm's radio and TV fill the airwaves, and you'll hear Swedish spoken almost everywhere.

Seaside Vaasa, known for its arty atmosphere and an island-full of kids' theme parks, is super-accessible by budget airline. The area is popular with families, boasting expansive sandy beaches at Kalajoki, and cosy holiday cottages dotting the dunes and woods.

When to Go

WEST COAST



Best Places to Eat

- » Gustav Wasa (p234)
- » Athens Palace (p231)
- » Bucco (p225)
- » Vanhankaupingin Ravintola (p240)

Best Places to Stay

- » Hotel Kantarellis (p234)
- » Hotel Astor (p234)
- » Spa Hotel SaniFani (p241)
- » Sokos Hotel Vaakuna (p225)

May Windsurfing season starts at Finland's most popular beach, Ytteri.

Jun Water babies delight as outdoor waterparks open their slides and turn on the wave machines.

Jul Some of Finland's biggest festivals – Pori Jazz, Seinäjoki's Tangomarkkinat and Vaasa Rock.



West Coast Highlights

- 1 Wandering the picturesque wooden Old Towns of **Rauma** (p220), **Jakobstad** (p236), **Kokkola** (p239) and **Kristinestad** (p227)
- 2 Paying your respects to genius inventor Per Bonk at Uusikaupunki's **Bonk Dynamo Centre** (p218)
- 3 Exploring the scattered **Kvarken Archipelago** (p237) by bike or canoe
- 4 Seeing a city as a symphony with Alvar Aalto's masterful town centre in **Seinäjoki** (p229)
- 5 Viewing modern art at Vaasa's impressive **Kuntsi museum** (p232)
- 6 Joining jolly crowds at Pori's fabulous **Jazz Festival** (p225), or pitching a tent at the fiddletastic **Kaustinen Folk Music Festival** (p239)
- 7 Letting the forest whisper you back to the Bronze Age at **Sammallahdenmäki burial site** (p223)
- 8 Paddling, windsurfing or flashing your bits in the naturist section – Finland's favourite beach **Yyteri** (p226) has space for everyone