



Finland

Includes »

Helsinki.....	129
South Coast.....	145
Turku.....	147
Tampere.....	157
Lakeland, Karelia & the East.....	167
Lapland.....	188
Understand Finland.....	198
Directory A–Z.....	203
Getting There & Away.....	206
Getting Around.....	207

Best Places to Eat

- » Musta Lammis (p177)
- » Olo (p138)
- » Figaro (p174)
- » Tuulensuu (p161)
- » Huvila (p171)

Best Places to Stay

- » Lossiranta Lodge (p169)
- » Dream Hostel (p161)
- » Lumihotelli (p193)
- » Hotel Fabian (p135)
- » Hotel Kantarellis (p165)

Why Go?

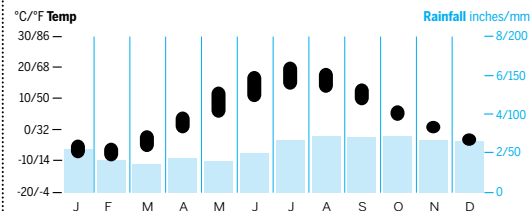
There's something pure in the Finnish air and a spirit that's incredibly vital and exciting. It's an invitation to get out and active year-round. A postsauna dip in an ice hole under the majestic aurora borealis (Northern Lights), after whooshing across the snow behind a team of huskies, isn't a typical winter's day just anywhere. And canoeing or hiking 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 elsewhere.

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

When to Go

Helsinki



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

Jul Everlasting daylight, countless festivals and discounted accommodation.

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

AT A GLANCE

- » **Capital** Helsinki
- » **Area** 338,145 sq km
- » **Population** 5.4 million
- » **Country code**
☑358
- » **Languages** Finnish, Swedish and Sámi languages
- » **Currency** euro (€)

Exchange Rates

Australia	A\$1	€0.73
Canada	C\$1	€0.71
Japan	¥100	€0.83
New Zealand	NZ\$1	€0.54
UK	UK£1	€1.12
USA	US\$1	€0.67

Set Your Budget

- » **Budget hotel room** €70
- » **Two-course evening meal** €40
- » **Museum entrance** €7
- » **Beer** €6
- » **City transport ticket** €3

Resources

- » **Visit Finland** (www.visitfinland.com)
- » **Matkahuolto** (www.matkahuolto.fi) Bus travel.
- » **Metsähallitus** (www.outdoors.fi) Great hiking resource.
- » **This is Finland** (www.finland.fi) Informative and entertaining.
- » **VR** (www.vr.fi) Train travel.

Connections

Road connections with Norway and Sweden are way up north, but ferries are big on the Baltic; an overnight boat can take you to Stockholm or even as far as Germany. Helsinki's harbour also offers quick and easy connections to Tallinn in Estonia, launch pad for the Baltic states and Eastern Europe. Finland's also a springboard for Russia, with boat, bus and train services available, some visa-free.

ITINERARIES

One Week

Helsinki demands at least a couple of days and is a good base for a day trip to Tallinn (Estonia) or Porvoo. In summer, head to the eastern Lakeland and explore Lappeenranta, Savonlinna and Kuopio; catch a lake ferry between the latter towns). In winter, take an overnight train or budget flight to Lapland (Rovaniemi) for a few days, visiting Santa, exploring Sámi culture and mushing with the huskies. A Helsinki–Savonlinna–Kuopio–Rovaniemi–Helsinki route is a good option.

Two Weeks

Spend a few days in Helsinki and Porvoo, visit the harbour town of Turku and lively Tampere. Next stops are Savonlinna and Kuopio in the beautiful eastern Lakeland. Head up to Rovaniemi, and perhaps as far north as Inari. You could also fit in a summer festival, some hiking in Lapland or North Karelia, or a quick cycling trip to Åland.

Essential Food & Drink

- » **Coffee** To fit in, eight or nine cups a day is about right, best accompanied with a cardamom-flavoured pastry.
- » **Offbeat meats** Unusual meats appear on menus: reindeer is a staple up north, elk is commonly eaten, and bear is also seasonally available.
- » **Fresh food** The kauppahalli (market hall) is where to go for a stunning array of produce. In summer, stalls at the kauppatori (market square) sell delicious fresh vegetables and fruit.
- » **Alcoholic drinks** Beer is a staple. Finns also love dissolving things in vodka; try a shot of *salmiakikossu* (salty-liquorice flavoured) or *fisu* (Fisherman's Friend-flavoured).
- » **Fish** Salmon is ubiquitous; tasty lake fish include arctic char, pike-perch and scrumptious fried *muikku* (vendace).