

Helsinki



The seasons pass through Finland's vast hinterlands and picturesque harbor-side cities with great emotion. A tranquil beauty settles over majestic swathes of ice and snow each winter, while summer's endless days resound with unparalleled exuberance. The pure Finnish air sweeps off the sapphire waters of the Baltic Sea, mingling with arctic winds in a rejuvenating waltz through springtime blossoms and autumn foliage. Enduring forests of birch and pine stretch across Finland's untouched wilderness to Helsinki, continental Europe's most northern capital. Homeland of iconic design brands, this radiant metropolis charms with neo-classical grace and a devotion to all that is cutting-edge in the world of art and technology.

Memorable Experiences

Summer Celebrations

Revel among bonfires and birch branches at June's Midsummer Eve fête.

National Hero

Stand under the Sibelius Monument and admire its 600 textured steel tubes.

City Gazing

Climb the tower at Olympic Park to see unsurpassed views of the city.

Afternoon Sweets

Savor a Neapolitan cake at Ekberg, Helsinki's oldest family run cafe.

Distinctive Details

The sky above Helsinki glows as the sun sweeps across the horizon. Merriment ensues among the dreamlike atmosphere of midsummer days, as Finland's long, warm afternoons stretch into magical "white nights."

Starwood Preferred Guest Recommends

Alvar Aalto

A simple teacart makes almost as much of an impact as an astounding building. In the stunning designs of Alvar Aalto, art merges with technology. One of the world's most influential architects, this Finnish son is known as the "Father of Modernism."

Destination Information

Country Finland
Province South Finland
Elevation 26 meters
Population 564,579 (2008)
Language Finnish, Swedish



Area Code: 9
Country Code: 358



Helsinki Vantaa Airport (HEL)



Transportation:
Car, Taxi, Train, Ferry, Tram, Metro, Bike



Euro

Nearby Luxury Collection Hotels and Resorts



Hotel Kämp

Pohjoisesplanadi, 29
Helsinki, 00100
Phone: (358)(9) 576111



Culture

Art, music, and theatre mingle in extraordinary works of stunning Finnish architecture.

Highly Recommended



Korjaamo Culture Factory

A red carpet leads to the glass doors of a historic lemon yellow tram depot. Photographs of Scandinavian beaches in winter, and full, withered heads of roses past their prime, hang within three galleries. As night falls, the sounds of avant-garde theater, chamber orchestras, and dance hall DJs drift through lush gardens that surround this dynamic space. The largest cultural center in Finland, Korjaamo presents a compelling program of established and emerging artists from all over the world, and offers iconic films and art books in its shop.

Address: Töölönkatu 51 A-B
Phone: (358) (207) 417 000



Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma

Long ramps curve against towering walls of gray. As natural light filters down through vast skylights, they illuminate angled spaces where horizontal and vertical dimensions merge. Some of the most invigorating art being created today passes through the Kiasma in an ongoing program of international exhibitions, which has included names such as Julian Schnabel, Nan Goldin, and Yoko Ono. New plays, independent films, and an annual electronic arts festival take place in the Kiasma Theatre, an exciting venue for the Helsinki's arts.

Address: Mannerheiminaukio 2
Phone: (358)(9) 17336501



Ateneum Art Museum

Gustavian era scenes of the hunt give way to rococo portraits. 19th century landscapes lead to masterworks of expressionism, cubism, and surrealism. An exceptional collection of over twenty thousand paintings, drawings, and prints reveals the fascinating development of Finnish art within this stately museum. Beyond its grand façade, crowned by an allegorical goddess, Grecian columns flank wide stairways that lead to elegant galleries. Here, beside the treasures of Finland's artistic heritage, hang revered works by Van Gogh, Gauguin, and Cézanne.

Address: Kaivokatu 2
Phone: (358)(9) 173361



Finlandia Hall

Cool air blows off the peaceful waters of Töölö Bay while a majestic fountain shoots graceful streams high into the offshore breeze. Steps from this glistening bay's tranquil shoreline, an icon of Finnish architecture rises. This inspiring beacon of white carrara marble and black oulainen granite, designed by the acclaimed architect Alvar Aalto in the 1960s, graces Helsinki's skyline with a timeless, modern aesthetic. Jazz bands and symphony orchestras perform within its vast auditoriums, while guided tours offer a detailed encounter within this revered landmark.

Address: Mannerheimintie 13 e
Phone: (358)(9) 402 4211



Shopping

Sought after fashions are on offer alongside the world's most cherished design brands.

Local Specialty



Artek Esplandai Store

A dynamic pattern of white tiles, edged in black, stretches across the floor of a long room. At Artek Esplandai, exceptionally designed furniture is grouped together as it would be in a fine, modern home. Behind a simple coffee table of wood and glass, planks of birch curve to form the frame of an elegant armchair. Further down, a tower of Alvar Aalto's iconic 1933 stools rises like a minimal wedding cake composed of natural wood. Renowned as one of the world's most innovative design brands, Artek combines art and technology in its enduring philosophy.

Address: Eteläesplanadi 18
Phone: (358)(9) 61325277

Neighborhoods



Design District Helsinki

The lacquered green rods of the "Latva Coat Rack" entwine like tall sheaths of bamboo among Erik Jorgensen sofas and Belux lamps at Aero. Asymmetrical blouses and A-line skirts hang at Liike just down the street, while across the way, red translucent chairs rest beneath Kartell's soft lights. An exceptional concentration of shops lies within this acclaimed district. A paradise for connoisseurs of good design, classic brands like Artek and Marimekko, beckon alongside award-winning independent labels from within historic Art Nouveau buildings.

Address: 25 streets centered around Diana Park in the heart of Helsinki.
Phone: (358)(9) 62208124

Shops & Boutiques



Arabia Centre

A grey brick building rises against a clear blue sky, the word "Arabia" descending down one side. Above, stands an image of Grecian figures with finely wrought water jugs clutched in their arms. A breathtaking emporium of Nordic design, this inspiring structure houses the most esteemed brands. A rainbow of dessert cups by Marimekko covers a table at the Arabia Factory Store in translucent stripes of red, orange, and indigo. Iittala wine glasses stand in a gleaming row of flutes and goblets while in the Finlayson shop, soothing patterns sweep across soft linens.

Address: Hämeentie 135
Phone: (358)(2) 04393507



Helsinki 10

Takahiro Miyashita eyeglass frames, carved of quince wood, sit beneath a glass cube, near long metal chains by Ann Demeulemeester. The most current names in fashion mingle in an amalgam of color beneath the lofty ceilings of this bright white store. European labels like Tiger of Sweden, Bernhard Willhelm, and Whyred hang in monochrome groups of black or yellow. Metallic clutches and hot pink pumps cover low platforms like precious works of art at this famed Helsinki shop.

Address: Eerikinkatu 3
Phone: (358)(1) 5489801



Cuisine

Nordic tradition encounters innovation from the skilled hands of acclaimed chefs.

Acclaimed



Ravintola Sea Horse

Tranquil seahorses glide through waves of aqua and cobalt blue. Striped with bands of electric red, these underwater creatures have graced the wall of this legendary dining room since the 1930s. They act as silent witnesses to convivial evenings shared around plates of classic Scandinavian and European dishes. Upon this renowned restaurant's menu, Baltic herring steaks join wiener schnitzel, and traditional Finnish meatballs. During the summer months, an open-air terrace provides an enchanting environment to spend a leisurely afternoon.

Address: Kapteeninkatu 11

Phone: (358)(9) 628169



Chez Dominique

A dollop of glistening caviar perches upon a fresh lobster tail, while glazed Iberico pork rests beside foie gras ravioli. One of the most highly acclaimed restaurants in Finland, this Michelin-starred eatery combines innovative cuisine with artful presentation. Delicacies from land and sea are prepared by the skilled hand of chef Hans Välimäki, who creates a surprise tasting menu of four, six, or nine courses each night. An impressive selection of champagnes joins a menu of European, Argentinean, and Australian wines.

Address: Rikhardinkatu 4

Phone: (358)(9) 6127393



Grotesk

Ornate cornices adorn a stunning red brick Beaux-Arts building. A ring of light frames the dark brown sign that hangs above Grotesk's exclusive door. Once the headquarters of a local newspaper, this grand structure now houses one of the city's most esteemed restaurants. Upon white porcelain, pan-seared scallops marinate within a puree of cauliflower, while drops of lime embellish a plate of smoked salmon. A glamorous dining room combines persimmon hues with a sophisticated palette of beige and black.

Address: Ludviginkatu 8

Phone: (358) (1) 4702110

Local Specialty



Olo

Honey-colored sauce swirls among gleaming cuts of sashimi. Golden nasturtium petals lie gently upon stalks of spring onions. Within an elegant main dining room, a courtyard patio, and three intimate salons, Nordic cuisine takes center stage. Exquisite seasonal offerings adorn a carefully prepared menu that changes often. Updated takes on traditional dishes such as halibut, fresh from the Baltic Sea, and Finnish lamb infused with aromatic thyme, pair wondrously with classic Bordeaux and more modern pinot noirs.

Address: Kasarmikatu 44

Phone: (358) (9) 665565



Noteworthy

Enchanting destinations reveal the unique nature of this rare locale.

Day Excursions



Suomenlinna

An icy cloak engulfs a rare archipelago, shrouding 17th century houses, barren docks, and stone wall barriers in silence. As the warmth of spring melts away winter's frost, music, art, and captivating tales of history reinvigorate these eight islands. Centered around a historic sea fortress, this World Heritage site offers adventure and discovery within fortified castles and vivid museums. Surrounded by a stunning protected landscape, where swans and geese nest, these radiant islands lie like precious jewels just off Helsinki's maritime shores.

Address: A 15 minute ferry trip from Helsinki's Market Square



Porvoo

Red-ochre storehouses line the edge of a peaceful river. Icons of this charming city, they testify to an important past as a center for maritime trade. Inviting courtyards and narrow, boutique-lined streets comprise the city's transporting Old Town. Designed under the rule of Czar Nicholas of Russia, its well-planned neighborhoods are shaded by blossoming trees and filled with distinctive cafes and art galleries. Visit intriguing sites like the 15th century cathedral, the home of poet J.L. Runeberg, and a whimsical sculpture garden.

Address: 50 kilometers east of Helsinki, along the E18 Highway
Phone: (358)(1) 95202316

Further Afield



Tallinn, Estonia

Terracotta-capped towers crown a medieval old town and loom above winding cobbled streets. Their fortified structures testify to history dating to the 12th century. Landmarks of ornate splendor, such as Russian Orthodox cathedrals with domed spires and grand palaces from the time of Peter the Great, counter this city's quaint, village atmosphere. Eighty kilometers across the dazzling Gulf of Finland, Estonia's picturesque capital offers an enchanting ambience. From late spring to late autumn, high-speed ferries make the journey in an hour and a half.

Address: 80 kilometers across the Gulf of Finland

Highly Recommended



Tempeliahaukio 'Rock' Church

Concentric circles radiate from an extraordinary copper ceiling like the cross section of a massive tree trunk. Beneath its orange-hued radiance, natural light streams through long, vertical panes of glass, illuminating rough walls of raw rock. A breathtaking sanctuary where architectural magnificence fuses with nature's majesty, this unrivaled structure was carved from a massive block of granite. Behind an unadorned altar, golden streaks stream like water through in a natural tapestry woven with the minerals of the earth.

Address: Lutherinkatu 3
Phone: (358)(9) 498698