FINLAND: THE HAPPIEST COUNTRY IN THE WORLD
Since 2018, the World Happiness Report has ranked Finland as the happiest country in the world.
What is the World Happiness Report?

The World Happiness Report ranks 156 countries by their happiness levels.

People in each country are asked to rate their life on a 10-step ladder from the best possible to the worst possible life for them.
Although the World Happiness Report measures subjective happiness, the study also attempts to explain each country’s score by referring to a range of underlying factors.
Why are Finns so happy?
Happiness starts with the basics: healthcare, poverty prevention and labour market access. In Finland, healthcare and income security are guaranteed to everyone.
Wealth also plays a part in Finns’ happiness. However, according to the World Happiness Report, GDP per capita alone doesn’t explain happiness.

What explains it, then?
The secret is: an infrastructure of happiness.

Finnish society is arranged in a way that allows for happiness.
Let’s take a look.
GOOD GOVERNANCE IS AT THE HEART OF HAPPINESS
Finland has the best governance in the world as measured by voter turnout, legislative independence and the number of women in Parliament.
Finland is also very stable when measured by political, social, economic and cohesion indicators.
The press is free in Finland. Press freedom entails media independence, pluralism, lack of self-censorship, transparency, good legislative framework and infrastructure.
And Finland measures the least amount of corruption in the world.
FINNS CAN TRUST THE SYSTEM AND EACH OTHER
Public institutions are trusted in Finland. People’s trust in institutions is a common indicator of public administrations’ performance.
The police are one of the most trusted institutions in Finland. More than 90% of Finns say they trust the police.
Trust in institutions is also a component of social capital. Other elements are high civic participation and strong personal and social relationships.
85% of Finns agree or strongly agree that they can trust most of their fellow citizens. This is the highest percentage in Europe.
TRUST COMES EASY WHEN FAIRNESS IS PAIRED WITH EQUALITY
Finland places strong emphasis on social rights and equality. Basic welfare is a priority, as is equality of political power by gender, social group and socioeconomic position.
Inclusivity includes minorities, too. There is very little discrimination or violence against minorities, and a high acceptance of sexual minorities.
GENDER EQUALITY IS ONE OF THE CORE VALUES OF FINNISH SOCIETY
Finland would not be the happiest country in the world had it not been for its strong commitment to equality.
Women make up 49% of the Finnish labour force. Affordable child care and strong maternity rights make it easy for mothers to have a career in Finland.
A working life that includes parental leave, flexible hours and remote work makes it easy for parents – and everyone else – to combine work with personal life.
Women and men are equal – both at work and at home. 80% of Finnish dads take paid parental leave.
Finland is also the only country in the developed world where fathers spend more time with their school-aged children than mothers do.
EVERYONE GETS AN EQUAL START IN FINLAND
Happiness starts at birth. Finland is committed to protecting, respecting and continually improving the rights of children.
To guarantee a more equal start to life, every child in Finland is welcomed into the world with a maternity package containing clothing and baby-care products.
An equal start for everyone requires healthy and happy mothers. Finland offers free prenatal care for mothers and nearly a year of paid parental leave when the child is born.
All children and their families are provided with healthcare and practical advice free of charge at *neuvola*, a national network of maternity and child health clinics.
EVERYONE CAN REALISE THEIR POTENTIAL
Equality also means equal access to education. Education is free for everyone from preschool to higher education. This means that everyone has the right to go attend university tuition-free.
And Finns are happy studying, too. According to the OECD’s PISA study, Finland is the only nation where both students’ reading skills and their satisfaction with life are at a high level.
In Finland, learning doesn’t end when you graduate. Finnish societal structures support lifelong learning and skills development at work.
Trust, equality and low hierarchies are also staples of Finnish work culture. Employees’ opinions are taken into account, and instead of constant monitoring, people are trusted to do what everyone has decided.
Closeness to nature fosters well-being.
Clean water, unpolluted air and unspoiled nature greatly contribute to wellbeing and happiness.
Nature is always close in Finland. Even if you live in a city, you are never more than a 10-minute walk from a park or forest.
Finns love the forest. More than 80% of Finns say the forest is important to them. Serenity, security, joy and energy are the words most associated with the woods.
Two-thirds of Finnish forests are owned by ordinary families, but the concept of Every Person’s Right means that anyone may hike, camp, and gather mushrooms and berries in any forest, regardless of who owns it.
To ensure future happiness, sustainable development needs to be a priority. This includes clean, affordable energy, responsible consumption and climate action.
PEOPLE IN FINLAND TRULY HAVE THE FREEDOM TO MAKE DECISIONS
Finland ranks first in political rights and civil liberties, while the Finnish infrastructure of happiness allows for even more comprehensive freedom.
People in Finland are free to make mistakes. Poor life decisions or bad luck don’t necessarily mean falling too far behind, and people are free to explore and find their own path.
In a well-functioning, safe, fair, equal and ‘error-friendly’ society, people can worry less and concentrate on living their lives. People have the freedom to be happy.
Finland: The Happiest Country in the World.
Extra slides for questions:
According to a survey commissioned by the Tax Administration in 2019, 80% of Finns are happy to pay their taxes, 96% believe paying taxes is an important civic duty and 98% believe taxes are important for maintaining Finland’s welfare state.