



SUOMI  
FINLAND

# FACTS ABOUT **FINLAND**





# Flexibility makes people happy

**FINLAND HAS HELD** first place in the *World Happiness Report* since 2018.

What makes people living in Finland happy?

First, a disclaimer: the *World Happiness Report* is not about ranking emotions, but rather surveys life satisfaction on a scale of 0-10. Ranking data considers factors such as social support, income, health, freedom, generosity and a low level of corruption.

While all the countries in *World Happiness Report* top 10, including the other Nordics, rank high in life satisfaction surveys and share many similar features such as universal healthcare, there's one element that makes living in Finland totally unique. It's flexibility.

Flexibility is the ability to adapt to change. It's the everyday choices based on an infrastructure of happiness that allow people in Finland to have a healthy work-life balance, to make career changes and personal choices without losing social support or access to free education.

**A culture of wellbeing allows people to live a meaningful life and thrive.**

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Flexibility is the  
ability to adapt  
to change.

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More info about Finland:  
[www.finland.fi](http://www.finland.fi)



# UNPACKING

## Finnish happiness

Happiness doesn't just happen. In Finland, it's the result of strong social systems and a culture of wellbeing that has been carefully built over the past 100 years.

**F**inland's goal is a society where trust, equality and safety nets create a secure environment. According to the *World Happiness Report*, Finland is the world's happiest country since 2018. Finns report an average score of 7.736 out of 10 when asked to evaluate their lives.

Life satisfaction in Finland is cultivated by fostering a society built on equality, fairness and freedom so that everyone has the right to be happy and safe, regardless of background or circumstance.

It starts early, with quality education that ensures equal access to lifelong learning, empowering individuals to succeed. Combined with a focus on media literacy and strong press freedom, this enables citizens to navigate information critically in an informed and engaged society.

In Finland, good governance enables political systems that are transparent,

accountable and committed to the rule of law. Shared responsibility, with over 90 percent of Finns considering paying taxes an important civic duty, strengthens social cohesion and promotes a fair and just society.

A healthy work-life balance, strong social connections and time spent in nature nurture long-term happiness and resilience. In Finland, a deep connection and easy access to nature promotes calmness, reduces stress and bolsters a sense of contentment.

Finnish culture places great value on meaningful moments. At the heart of this is the sauna, which offers an egalitarian space where everyone is welcome to relax and detach from daily pressures and reconnect with themselves and others.

Appreciation of simplicity puts emphasis on life's daily moments and celebrates functionality and thoughtful design.

All of these key elements are part of Finland's infrastructure of happiness.



Photo: Marniina Mäkelä / Keksi / City of Helsinki

### The how of happiness

1. Trust is a foundation and cornerstone of society.
2. Good governance needs a political system that is transparent, accountable and committed to the rule of law.
3. A framework of support combines stability and safety nets, creating an environment where individuals can make life choices without fear of failure.
4. Shared responsibility strengthens social cohesion and promotes a fair and just society.
5. Participation and dialogue between the public and authorities cultivates inclusion and empowerment.
6. Equality and social justice means strong protection

- for minorities and fosters a socially inclusive environment.
7. Education and information through Finland's world-class education system ensures equal access to high-quality learning, empowering individuals to succeed.
8. Connection and accessibility to nature promotes wellness and happiness.
9. Simplicity and sauna: Finnish culture is deeply rooted in an appreciation for simplicity, functionality and the importance of life's small moments.
10. Work-life balance, where personal wellbeing is prioritised alongside professional commitments.



Photo: Julia Kivela / City of Helsinki



Photo: Maja Astikainen / City of Helsinki

# THIS IS FINLAND

A multilingual nation at the top of Europe



Finland has a total area of about

**337,000 km<sup>2</sup>**

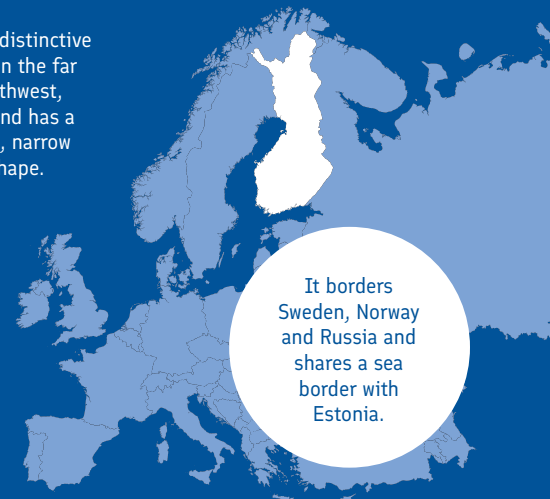
(130,116 square miles)

The longest distance between north and south is 1,157 km (719 miles), more than twice as far as its greatest width.



**1,157 km (719 miles)**

With a distinctive arm in the far northwest, Finland has a long, narrow shape.



The coastline of mainland Finland stretches more than

**6,300 km**

(3,914 miles)



Its land borders total

**2,563 km**

(1,593 miles), more than half of that with Russia.



Finland has a population of  
**5.65 million**



Finland has two national languages: Finnish (spoken by 84% of the population) and Swedish (5%). The indigenous Sámi language spoken by less than one percent, while almost 11% speak other native languages, most commonly Russian, Estonian and Arabic.

**84%**  
Finnish

**11%**  
other

**5%**  
Swedish

**<1%**  
Sámi

**62%**

62% of the population is registered as members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Most of them do not actively participate in religious practice.



**Finland's biggest cities**  
(population 2024)

1. Helsinki – 684,018
2. Espoo – 320,931
3. Tampere – 260,180
4. Vantaa – 251,269
5. Oulu – 216,152



**Population density 2025**

**18.5**

inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>





Taija Koivuluoma (left)  
and Aino Eeronheimo are  
neighbours and friends.  
They live in Helsinki.



Photos: Milka Kallu

# “WOW” MOMENTS

## in Finnish nature

Going into the forest daily is a passion for Aino Eeronheimo and Taija Koivuluoma. They’re friends and neighbours in Jakomäki, eastern Helsinki.

**F**or Taija, time alone in nature counterbalances her job as a hairdresser in central Helsinki and home life with her children. “At work, I am very sociable and close to the customers, so I need to be alone for at least 2-3 hours a day. Nature balances my mental health and gives me calmness and relaxation that I can’t get anywhere else,” she says.

She runs every morning for an hour or two before work, accompanied by Camu, her young Labradoodle. The two head out again for an evening walk, totalling 10-20 kilometres (6-12 miles) a day.

“We usually go to a lovely old forest nature reserve in Kivikko, near home. If I want more light in the autumn or winter, I go to the old Malmi airport area,

where there are flat meadows. That’s also good for cross-country skiing, but so is Kivikko, where there aren’t as many people,” she says with a grin. She also swims outdoors all year round in a local pond.

### MAGICAL MOMENTS

Aino prefers more leisurely strolls along forest trails and duckboards in the nearby Slåttmossen and Vaarala natural areas. In winter, she walks mainly on

Follow this QR-code to watch a video about Finns’ relationship with nature.



One of the best nature experiences in late summer and autumn is going mushroom picking.





Nature is always nearby, no matter where you live.

snow trails in Kivikko. A ceramicist and former art teacher, she moved from Lapland to Helsinki about a decade ago. Aino gets inspiration from nature for her art. She also enjoys identifying bird calls with the help of a mobile app, and taking pictures, especially of lizards.

“Slättmossen has a bog area with beautiful blooming marsh rosemary and even cloudberry, which remind me of Lapland,” she says. “Vaarala has a tall spruce forest. I went walking there last spring when I was feeling down. A fox ran past me, then stopped a few metres away and looked me in the eye for a long time. It was somehow comforting and cheered me up.”

Another “wow” moment was in Lapland, where she used to go on long hiking trips and still has a cabin. “One night, there was moonlight and Northern Lights. The snow was sparkling with this amazing green light, and just then two reindeer came along. It was miraculous.”

Koivuluoma also enjoys Lapland, especially summer camping trips in Urho Kekkonen National Park. “I love the mornings there when it’s completely

quiet, still and misty,” she says. She and Eeronheimo both credit their parents for instilling a love of roughing it in nature when they were children.

“I’m completely dependent on nature; I have been since childhood,” says Eeronheimo.

Koivuluoma agrees, saying: “The best thing about Finnish nature is that it’s always nearby, no matter where you live. You can find real nature even in Helsinki.”



Everyone has access to nature

People in Finland are free to enjoy wild areas without landowners’ permission, with certain restrictions. Under the principle of “everyone’s right”, which dates back more than a century, anyone can use natural areas for hiking, cycling, skiing and swimming, for instance, as well as fishing and picking wild berries and mushrooms, with some limits.

This sparsely populated country is about three-quarters forest, so there’s plenty of room to roam – as long as you don’t bother anyone by going too close to their home, yard or farmland. Camping is fine if you don’t litter, stay too long or light a fire without permission.

EXPLORING FINNISH NATURE

77% of Finland’s total land area is covered in forest.



Nearly 30% of Finland’s area is bogland.



Finland has 188,000 lakes. Finland’s largest lakes are Saimaa, Päijänne and Inari.

Finland has nearly 180,000 islands.

Finland has 41 national parks.

FINLAND’S FOUR SEASONS VARY AND OVERLAP DEPENDING ON THE LATITUDE.

**Summers** (May-September) are warm and bright with lots of daylight. **Midnight sun** is a phenomenon in arctic regions where the sun remains visible at midnight during summer.

**Autumn** (September-November) paints the landscape with gorgeous colours from the northernmost fells to the archipelago in the south. *Ruska* is a colourful autumn foliage.

**Winter** (November-April) is usually marked by snow cover and frozen lakes across the country; Lapland offers the longest skiing season. **Polar night** is the winter period in arctic regions when the sun stays below the horizon.

As days are getting longer again **spring** (March-May) brings melting snow and ice and budding wildflowers and trees.

In Finland, you are never more than a 10-minute walk from a park or forest.

Finland’s national tree is the silver birch (*Betula pendula*).



The national flower is the lily of the valley (*Convallaria majalis*).

Finland’s highest fell is Halti 1,324 metres (4,344 feet).

500 km The longest river, Kemi River (310 miles).

About 300,000 people use hunting permits in Finland annually.

Fishing is popular in Finland, with some 1.8 million people taking part every year.



The average Finn engages in outdoor activities three times a week, 182 times a year.



Finland is one of the world’s best regions for seeing Northern Lights (*aurora borealis*), especially in Lapland.



# HOW FINLAND BECAME FINLAND



c. 9000BCE

Settlement of Finland begins with the end of the last Ice Age.



c. 1150

Finland becomes part of the Swedish realm.



1640

First university is founded in Finland.



1809

After the Finnish War, Finland passes from Sweden to Russia as an autonomous Grand Duchy.



1849

National epic *Kalevala* is published, inspiring Finnish language and identity.



1866

National school system is established, a major step toward equality and literacy.



1899

Sibelius composes *Finlandia*, an anthem of Finland's national awakening.



1906

Finland grants full political rights to women—the first country in the world to do so.



1917

Finland declares independence.



1933

Alvar Aalto's modernist designs bring international attention to Finnish architecture and design.



1938

Maternity Grants Act provides maternity packages to all new mothers.



1939

The Winter War begins.



1945

Tove Jansson publishes her first Moomin book.

1944

The Continuation War ends.



1948

Finland becomes the first country to provide free school meal, advancing children's wellbeing.

W

hen the last glacial period ended more than 10,000 years ago, people began to settle in the land that would become Finland.

For centuries, communities relied on hunting, fishing and small-scale trade, with the Baltic Sea linking distant shores. Finland's story has always been one of adaptation, resilience and cooperation.

In the 12th century, Finland became part of the Swedish realm and remained so for more than 600 years. Western legal and

administrative traditions took root, and the Lutheran faith became central to community life. Church schools and parish structures laid the groundwork for Finland's later education system and local self-government. In 1809, Sweden lost Finland to the Russian Empire, and Finland became an autonomous Grand Duchy. Though ruled from St. Petersburg, it retained its own laws and institutions, fostering a growing national identity.

The 19th century saw the rise of Finnish language and culture. The *Kalevala*,

published in 1849, wove folk poetry into a national epic that helped Finns imagine a shared heritage. Artists such as Jean Sibelius and Akseli Gallen-Kallela gave expression to this spirit through music and painting. Around the same time, Finland introduced its own currency, developed industries in forestry and metalwork, and expanded public education.

In 1906, Finnish women gained full political rights, the first in Europe to have both the right to vote and stand for election. The spirit

of reform continued over the next decade, and in 1917 Finland declared independence from Russia. The early years were difficult—a brief civil war left lasting divisions—but Finland remained a democracy and continued to develop. In the 1920s and 1930s, major social advances followed: maternal and child health clinics, expanded education and improved public health.

The wars of 1939–1944 tested the nation's endurance. Despite heavy losses, Finland preserved its independence and rebuilt

rapidly. Reconstruction turned Finland into an industrial nation, while wartime resilience deepened trust in public institutions and strengthened the foundations of education, welfare and equality.

From the 1950s onward, Finland looked outward. It joined the Nordic Council in 1955, entered the United Nations the same year and hosted the Helsinki Olympics in 1952, showcasing national recovery. Trade with both East and West and pragmatic diplomacy became key to stability and growth during





Finland made its mark through art, design and innovation.

1952

Helsinki hosts the Summer Olympics, a symbol of its postwar recovery.

1964

Marimekko's bold textile patterns gain worldwide recognition.

1972

Comprehensive school reform strengthens equal access to education for ages 7–16.

2006

Finland wins Eurovision Song Contest for the first time with Lordi's "Hard Rock Hallelujah".

2008

Former President Martti Ahtisaari wins Nobel Peace Prize for international conflict resolution.

2017

Equal marriage rights are established for same-sex couples.

2019

Sanna Marin becomes the youngest Prime Minister in the world leading a government where all party chairs are women.

the Cold War. By joining the European Union in 1995 and NATO in 2023, Finland strengthened its international cooperation and security.

Beyond politics, Finland made its mark through art, design and innovation. The clean lines of Alvar Aalto's architecture and the bold patterns of Marimekko's textiles defined a new visual language, while Tove Jansson's Moomin stories brought Finnish imagination to readers worldwide. Later, technology became a new cultural export: Nokia transformed Finland into a pioneer of mobile communications, linking millions globally.

Today, Finland is known for its education, transparency and strong sense of community. Reforms that once divided opinion have become the pillars of a fair society, though debate still shapes its future. From peace mediation to climate action, Finland takes an active international role, seeking to contribute rather than compete. The journey from a remote northern region to one of the world's happiest and most trusted nations is the result of centuries of building, learning and shared progress.

FINNISH SOCIETY TODAY

200

Finland is a parliamentary republic. The Parliament has 200 members, elected every four years.

The Government is headed by the Prime Minister and typically has around 20 ministers. The President of the Republic is elected in a direct popular vote for a six-year term. Alexander Stubb, Finland's 13th president, began his term in 2024.

87%

Trust in institutions is among the highest in the world. 87% of Finns express high trust in the police, the most trusted authority in Finland.

All Finnish citizens are required to participate in national defence. Men are required to serve upon turning 18, while women may volunteer. Most conscripts complete 165 to 347 days of military service, after which they remain in the reserve until age 50 or 60.

280,000

900,000

The wartime strength of Finland's defence forces is 280,000, supported by 900,000 reservists, which is about 2/5 of every Finnish citizen aged 18–60.

Finland ranks first in the world for its contribution to the common good of humanity.

1995

2023

Finland joined the European Union in 1995 and NATO in 2023.

Finland is one of the most transparent and least corrupt countries.

Source: Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index 2024

Equality, transparency and civic participation are cornerstones of Finnish society. Together, these factors create safety, stability and trust – reasons why Finland is considered one of the best countries to live in.

Source: OECD Survey on Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions 2024

Finland is rated among the most stable countries in the world.

Source: Fragile States Index 2024





Photo: Ilari Välimäki

# TOP-CLASS EDUCATION

## is one of the keys to happiness

Education based on equality is a cornerstone of life in Finland.

**T**he Finnish education system is designed to instil the joy of lifelong learning in everyone. Anyone can continue their education at any point, regardless of age or previous academic background.

The learning path starts early with excellent early childhood education and care (ECEC) before comprehensive education begins, usually at age seven with first grade.

At ECEC, young children learn a range of practical skills, including interpersonal tools vital for life. Self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making comprise what's known as social-emotional learning (SEL).

From ECEC through primary and lower secondary education (comprehensive school), which is compulsory and lasts nine years, a child-centred pedagogy

priorities the needs, interests and experiences of the individual child.

In addition to transversal skills—abilities that apply across different disciplines and life situations—education also emphasises phenomenon-based learning. This is an interdisciplinary, student-centered approach where learning is built around real-world, complex phenomena.

Following comprehensive education, there are many different options from



Photo: Vesa Laitinen / City of Helsinki

Both in schools and in daycare, outdoor activities are held regularly even during winter.



Everyone has the right to a free basic education.

vocational and upper secondary education to higher education at universities and universities of applied sciences.

ALL SCHOOLS ARE GOOD

As equality is synonymous with the Finnish education system, the inclusive, high-quality education system is public. That means every school is a good school. All teachers have a master’s degree. There are very few private schools and those that do exist follow the national core curriculum and receive funding from taxes.

By law, everyone has the right to a free basic education, which includes the necessary support for learning such as school supplies and meals.

Instruction of Finnish as a second language is available according to pupils’ needs if their mother tongue is not one of the official languages (Finnish, Swedish or Sámi), they have a multilingual background, or their basic Finnish language skills are still developing.

Finland is among the best in the world in English-language proficiency, and it’s possible to study in English in many schools and fields.

DIGITALISATION AND MEDIA LITERACY

The Finnish education system has many strengths, including multiliteracy and media literacy education to strengthen competences in information and communications technology (ICT) and provide tools and skills for understanding different types of media.

For example, digital competency skills are introduced early in childhood education and care.

Multiliteracy and media literacy lessons continue through primary and lower secondary education, onto upper secondary education, post-secondary and into lifelong learning.

Understanding how the media works and recognising disinformation is a crucial skill in today’s world.



Photo: Maija Astikainen / City of Helsinki

School meals: A Finnish success story

The school meal system plays an essential role in Finland’s educational system. Equal access to education and free-of-charge school meals have been key factors in supporting economic growth and transforming Finland into a knowledge-based society.

Initially, school meals were introduced to address post-war poverty and malnutrition. The law to provide meals free of charge for all pupils came into force nationwide in Finland in 1948.

All children should have the opportunity to eat lunch at school so that they are well-nourished and can focus on their studies. Early childhood education includes the meals a child needs during the day: breakfast, lunch, an afternoon snack and a second warm meal if needed.

LIVING IN FINLAND

Number of families in Finland (2023)

1,466,954

Average size of family



2.7 persons

Families with children

550,183

A family with underage children is a family comprising at least one child aged under 18 living at home.

How many kids per family?



44%

1 child



39%

2 children



12%

3 children



5%

4+ children

2.9 million

households (2024)



Size of households (2024)



47%

Persons living alone



32%

2 persons



21%

3+ persons

A household consists of all persons occupying the same dwelling on a permanent basis.

Sources: Finland in Figures 2025, Statistics in Finland, Finnish Environmental Institute



80.0 m²

Floor area per household

41.6 m²

Floor area per person

Summer houses (2024)

495,145

Urbanisation rate of Finland (2023)

74%

Type of building



48%

Blocks of flats



37%

Detached and semi-detached houses



13%

Terraced houses

1%

Other

Tenure status of households (2023)



61%

Owner occupied



36%

Rented

3%

Other

Estimated average age of people leaving their parental home

EU

26.2

Finland

21.4



The dynamic between the children and their father has been positively influenced by the fact that their father, Tommi, took the paternity leave with them both while they were babies.



Photos: Vili Orava

# FINLAND INVESTS

## in family life

A growing number of fathers are taking care of their young children as parenthood is considered a shared responsibility in Finland.

“I took paternity leave of one year for each of our children when they were babies, so that was two years in total,” says **Tommi Lujanen**, 51. “I very much enjoyed spending time with our kids, and it was a good arrangement for our family as my wife Anna is the more career-oriented one.”

Both **Anna Lujanen**, 48, and her husband Tommi find their work meaningful. Tommi is the teamleader of a mental health counselling unit and Anna is a TV executive. They live with their two children, **Lily**, 14, and **Felix**, 12, in the family-friendly city of Espoo, which is part of the Greater Helsinki Region.

Tommi says he has chosen a career that allows him to give back to the

community and finish work early in order to be with the kids and participate in their hobbies. “I’m also the coach for my son Felix’s football team,” he says.

### BETTER TOGETHER

In Finland, fathers are increasingly taking care of young children independently,



While mother Anna is on a business trip, father Tommi, Lily and Felix are spending free time together.



Tommi is the coach of Felix's football team.

according to new research by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) and the Social Insurance Institution of Finland (Kela).

Carried out between 2022-24, the study found that workplaces in Finland generally welcome the use of family leave, and flexible working conditions make it easier to coordinate work and family life.

This follows on the heels of reforms to Finland's family leave legislation that came into effect in 2022 allowing parents more flexibility about the division of childcare responsibilities. One of the goals of the reform was to enhance equality in the workplace and home, as women's salary levels and career prospects have been known to be adversely affected by long periods of maternal leave.

The report also found the use of family leave and parental leave is strongly linked to the socio-economic status of both mothers and fathers. Higher-educated fathers took more family leave than lower-educated fathers. An even stronger connection was found between the mother's level of education and income and the father's use of family leave: the more educated and higher



earning the mother, the more likely the father was to take paternity leave after parental leave.

**BUILDING HAPPINESS**

It's easier to balance work and family life when there's an infrastructure that supports personal wellbeing.

"We live in a society where it's not okay to work long hours, and value is placed on wellbeing," says Tommi Lujanen.

"We're able to prioritise our family's wellbeing," says Anna Lujanen. "And we enjoy spending time together as a

family doing a range of activities from camping and hiking to watching Felix's football games and going to museums and cultural events."

Lily is an avid dancer (show dance and lyrical jazz), takes painting and drawing classes at an art school, and loves movies and books.

And what makes the kids happy? For Felix and Lily, independence is one of the benefits of living in a community where everything is nearby.

"I walk to school through a forest on my own and it's totally safe," says Lily Lujanen with a smile.

Follow this QR-code to watch a video about Finnish family life.



**Working life is functional and flexible**

**IN FINLAND**, one of the world's most connected countries, high-speed internet connections are widely available. This helps to ensure large-scale telecommuting, which is possible in many workplaces.

Work-life balance is valued in Finland and there are long annual holidays.

Employers continually train employees with new and upgraded skills.

In general, Finns communicate well in English, and it is the official language of many Finland-based international companies and organisations.

In a culture based on trust, you can rely on your colleagues in Finland.

Finnish working life is characterised by low hierarchies and an informal, equal working culture.

**WORK-LIFE BALANCE IS VALUED IN FINLAND**

**Youth satisfaction with life 2024**  
(Persons aged 16 to 24)

**84%**  
Very satisfied or satisfied



**15%**  
Not at all or a little satisfied



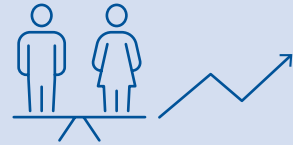
One in ten employed people aged 20-64 living in Finland was of foreign origin in 2024.

Source: Finland in Figures 2025, Statistics Finland Stat.fi; Kela, the Social Insurance Institution of Finland, kela.fi

**80%**



Eighty per cent of children aged 1-6 participated in early childhood education and care in 2024.



The share of parental leave used by fathers grew faster during 2022-2024 than in previous years.

This follows on the family leave reform that came into effect in August 2022, when parental leave was divided equally between parents.





Photos: Miika Kanu

# FINDING BALANCE

## and belonging in Finland's game industry

Building inclusion at Rovio

**W**hen **Yumi Oishi** joined Rovio in 2018 as the company's first Talent Acquisition Manager, she built the team from scratch. Today, she leads Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at the Finnish game studio known for Angry Birds.

"My job is about understanding how people are different and making sure we give them what they need so everyone can do their best work," she says.

**FROM TOKYO TO ESPOO**

Before Rovio, Oishi worked for Google in Tokyo and Zurich for over a decade. Moving to Finland in 2018 was both a personal and professional turning point. "I was curious about what it means to be a woman in one of the most

gender-equal countries in the world," she explains. "Equality is built into this country, but equity is a new concept. It took time for people to understand that sometimes you have to treat people differently because people have different needs."

Living in Finland, Oishi found that when people make space for life outside work, equality naturally takes

Follow this QR-code to watch a video about Finnish working life.



Yumi Oishi moved to Finland from Tokyo in 2018.





Working in Finland  
has offered more  
than a career.

root. “Even though it’s not framed as a gender-equality initiative, work-life balance plays such a big role,” she says. “My colleagues will say, ‘I can’t attend this meeting, it’s four o’clock, I have to pick up my kids,’ and that’s across all genders. It’s not just for women, it’s for everyone.”

A SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY

At Rovio, humour and humanity play a big role. “My colleagues are hilarious,” Oishi laughs. “My job can be emotional-ly draining, but having teammates that have a great sense of humour helps a lot.”

She also values the collaborative nature of Finland’s game industry. Rovio is part of Better Games Together, which brings together Supercell, Rovio, Metacore, Next Games and the nonprof-it We in Games to promote LGBTQIA+ inclusion.

“That group has been so support-ive—really good friends for me are inside that group,” Oishi says.

FORESTS, LIBRARIES  
AND A RICH LIFE

Outside of work, Oishi has embraced the Finnish way of finding peace in nature.

“I live next to a forest, so I can get free berries and mushrooms. I can listen to a podcast, take a walk, it’s good for my body, then I get these free health su-perfoods. I would have never imagined doing that in Tokyo,” she says.

She has also discovered the joy of Finnish libraries.

“Every time I have a visitor from Japan, I take them to Oodi,” she says, referring to Helsinki’s striking central li-brary. The light-filled building combines

bookshelves with public meeting spac-es, studios and even sewing machines. “I want to share with them: this is how Finland uses taxpayer money. If I put my Japan hat on, a library is just a building. You go there for the books. But the library here, it’s not just books.”

For Oishi, working in Finland has offered more than a career. “I think my driver in life is to experience, learn and reflect. And I think Finland gives me the space to do that.”

Oishi works in Finland at an international gaming company, Rovio.



More than 42,000 new enterprises are founded in Finland each year, reflecting a strong culture of entrepreneurship and innovation that has produced over 4,200 active startups.



Source: Finland in Figures 2025, Statistics Finland Stat.fi, European Skills Index Technical Report 2024

FINNISH WORKING LIFE

Total earnings of wage  
and salary earners 2023

Euro per month, median



Skills development at work

Finns have the 4th best opportunities in Europe to develop their skills at work.

GDP 2024 per capita:



Top three industries  
ranked by turnover





# COOL CULTURE

**F**inland supports everyone's opportunity to express themselves through culture, be it as creators or participants, professionally or as amateurs. What's more, the rhythm of Finnish working life supports healthy work-life balance, thereby facilitating broad participation in all things culture.

It's not hard to find that Finnish culture and arts are powered by a combination of unique linguistic roots, design aesthetics and a deep connection to nature. As a result, the world has been treated to a steady stream of authentic cultural masterpieces, both big and small.

Paula Parviainen, Ambassador for Culture and Creative Industries at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, was interviewed for this story.



Photo: Jussi Helsten / City of Helsinki



Photo: Nimmi West / City of Helsinki

## Everyday design

Finnish design is aesthetic, functional and accessible to everyone. Championing the fields of furniture, textiles, ceramics and glass, Finland boasts such masters as Tapio Wirkkala, Timo Sarpaneva, Eero Aarnio, Maija Isola, Kaj Franck and Helena Tynell.

## Game on!

**250** active game studios in Finland



**THE "GREATEST HITS"** of the gaming industry include Angry Birds, Alan Wake, Hay Day, Max Payne, Brawl Stars and Clash of Clans.



**"SANDSTORM" BY DARUDE**  
The most streamed song by a Finnish pop artist.

## The Moomins

"All things are so very uncertain. And that's exactly what makes me feel reassured."

Did the Moomins crack the code to Finnish happiness back in the day? – Be as it may, Tove Jansson's Moomins have taken the world by (gentle) storm, sharing their home-spun philosophy of family and adventure with one generation after another.

The first Moomin book (*The Moomins and the Great Flood*) was published in 1945.



Photo: Förlaget



Photo: Tuomas Uusheimo / City of Helsinki

## Natural edge

The creative use of wood and design – inspired by nature – are well represented in Finnish architecture, including the enduring works of the architect and designer couple Alvar and Aino Aalto.

## Reader's republic

In Finland, books are published at the second-highest rate per capita in the world. Libraries are the most popular public service. In libraries, you can read and borrow books and magazines. Many libraries offer not only computers but also equipment such as sewing machines and other devices. Libraries are accessible to everyone and serve a variety of language groups.

## Public libraries 2024

**715**  
libraries



**85.4**  
million items loaned

## HELSINKI CENTRAL LIBRARY OODI

Finland's gift to itself upon turning 100, the amazing next-gen library represents cutting-edge Finnish architecture.



Photo: Marjaana Malkamäki / City of Helsinki

Access to  
**360**  
museums  
with 1 card!

## Museum Card

Launched in 2015, the inexpensive Museum Card has 350,000 active card-carriers who have made over 13 million museum visits so far.



# SACRED SAUNA

Saunas 2024

2.4 million



Finland has hundreds of public saunas for everyone to enjoy.

Photo: Julia Kivela / City of Helsinki

Most Finns have saunas in their own homes.

**F**or Finns, there is no place more magical than the sauna. It's so magical, in fact, that in the old days, sauna had not one, but two guardian spirits – *Anterettoin and Auterinen* – serving as its caretakers. And since sauna was the cleanest place in any household, generations upon generations of Finns have

been born in a sauna. (Not for a hundred years, however.) Today, sauna is a place where Finns go to forget about their troubles and to be One with the Universe. Sauna means ultimate relaxation and wellbeing. For Finns, it has also been the birthplace of countless ideas and innovations.

## What is a sauna whisk?



- Finns occasionally use sauna whisks to whip their backs in a sauna – gently or not so gently.
- A whisk makes the sauna experience more intense and enjoyable.
- A sauna whisk is made from clean birch branches.
- Sauna whisks must be fresh (no more than two days old).
- Don't tap anyone but yourself with a whisk – unless they ask for it.



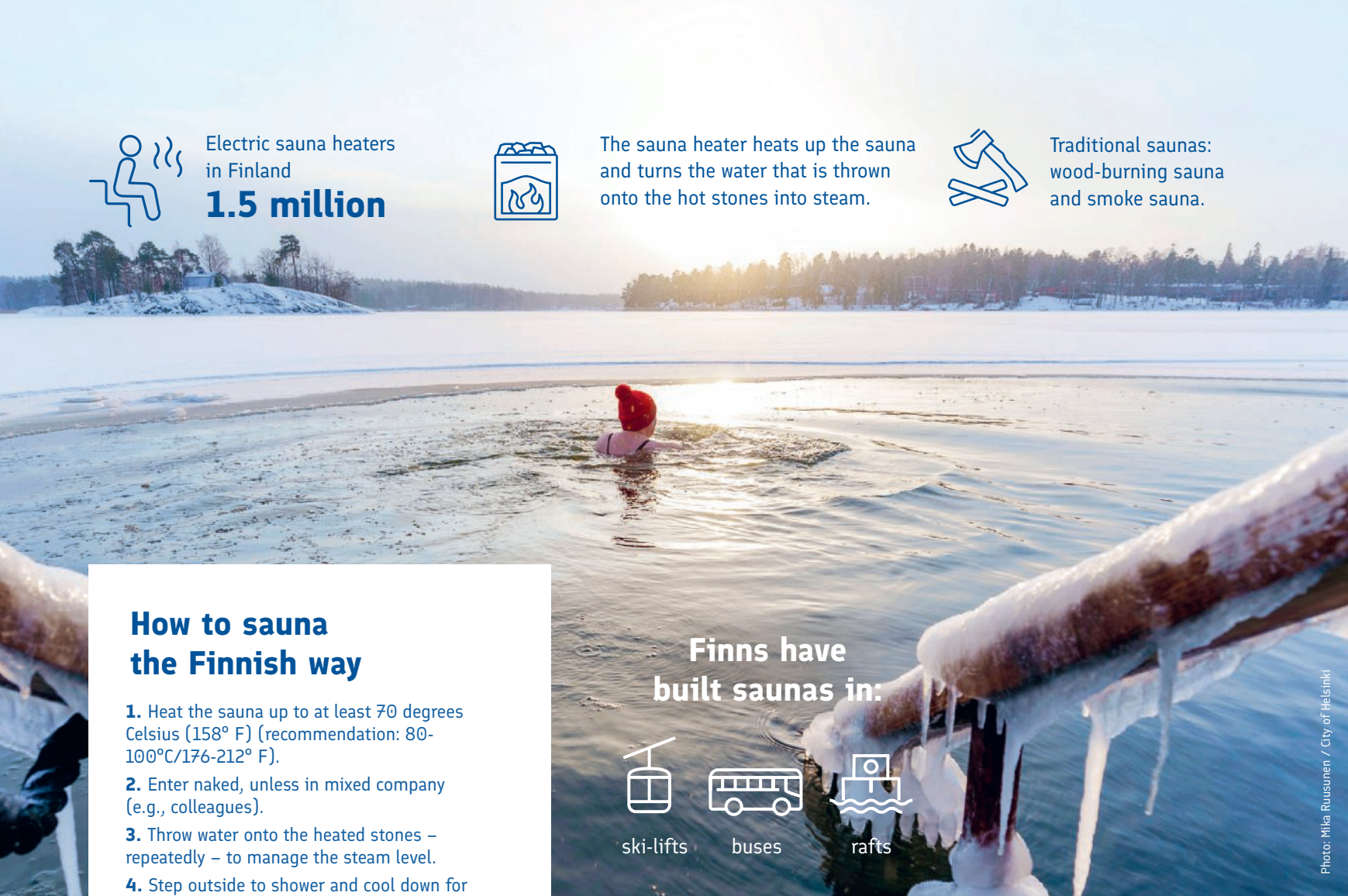
Electric sauna heaters in Finland  
**1.5 million**



The sauna heater heats up the sauna and turns the water that is thrown onto the hot stones into steam.



Traditional saunas: wood-burning sauna and smoke sauna.



## How to sauna the Finnish way

1. Heat the sauna up to at least 70 degrees Celsius (158° F) (recommendation: 80-100°C/176-212° F).
2. Enter naked, unless in mixed company (e.g., colleagues).
3. Throw water onto the heated stones – repeatedly – to manage the steam level.
4. Step outside to shower and cool down for a moment – and then get right back in.
5. Pro tip 1: dive into a lake or roll in the snow (if applicable).
6. Pro tip 2: use a sauna whisk for the next-level sauna experience.

Sources: Executive Manager Janne Koskeniemi, the Finnish Sauna Society; sauna.fi

## Finns have built saunas in:



ski-lifts



buses



rafts

## Sauna etiquette – to talk or not to talk?

It's alright to talk in a public sauna, for instance, if you're not too loud and steer clear of controversial topics, such as politics or religion. With family and friends, there's nothing better than engaging in a great conversation, sitting all warm and snug in a sauna.

Photo: Mika Ruusunen / City of Helsinki





## Did you know?

Beloved by all, especially by children, Santa Claus brings good cheer and joy every Christmas without fail. As everyone knows, he lives in Finnish Lapland, the northernmost part of Finland. Ancient legend has it that Santa's home is located on Korvatunturi, a peak in the Finnish far north. Only his elves and Christmas reindeer know the exact spot.

Although the precise location of his home is a secret, he maintains a public office near the Finnish city of Rovaniemi, too. At Santa Claus Village, right on the Arctic Circle, he welcomes friends from around the globe every single day of the year. People of all ages also write to him from every country in the world, totaling about half a million letters each year.

Santa Claus is an ambassador of goodwill who has dedicated his life to cherishing the happiness of children and the kindness of us all. His most important mission? To remind people of all ages that there is a world of fairytales and dreams where everyone is always welcome.

The views expressed herein are solely those of the authors.

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