Insider's Guide

Visit Finland
This book is about real people, places, photographs and stories. We asked our fans on Facebook and visitors for memories and images associated with Finland. The material provides a unique insight into what this country is about. Discover the real Finland and see where it takes you.
I’ve met a lot of Finnish people and they’re all mad as a bag of frogs – but very lovable.

DAVID, UK
I used to have an all-time favourite Finn who had me glued to the TV every Formula 1 weekend: Kimi Räikkönen. Thanks to him I wanted to visit Finland for a very long time. When I came here for the very first time 4 years ago, I met my number one Finn, my awesome boyfriend, who gave me my second favourite Finn 10 months ago: our lovely son Lukas. I have to thank Kimi one day. :)

G. LOPEZ
Republic of Finland

POPULATION: 5,400,000
CAPITAL: HELSINKI
LANGUAGES: FINNISH, SWEDISH, SÁMI
FLIGHT TIMES: LONDON: 3H, NEW YORK: 8H, BEIJING: 8H, SHANGHAI: 9H, TOKYO: 10H
NEIGHBOURS: SWEDEN, NORWAY, ESTONIA, RUSSIA
CURRENCY UNIT: EURO
As long as you’re in Finland, the actual place doesn’t matter. I once told a friend I would be happy just sitting on a lonely street – as long as it’s in Finland.

PATRÍCIA, HUNGARY
Helsinki is a modern European city, where more than 450 years of history and tradition blend seamlessly with contemporary design and trends. Cosy and compact, the Finnish capital is a stress-free place to explore. Design, architecture, culture and shopping are all great exploration angles. Needless to say, there's something going on in Helsinki every day of the year.
Helsinki is the Most Liveable City in the World.

MONOCLE’S QUALITY OF LIFE SURVEY
I grew up in Finland but haven’t been there for over 20 years. I miss mostly the meat pies from the railway station in Helsinki, and the marketplace (Kauppatori) by the sea. I also miss the fresh fish – even the smell – sold by the vendors at the markets.

ANNA, FINLAND
A breezy Baltic port with a strong tradition of design, an alternative nightlife and an edgier feel than some of its Scandinavian cousins.

JOANNE, THE GUARDIAN

Top 5 things to do in Helsinki

1. Go for a picnic on one of the archipelago islands

2. Walk in Kallio, a neighbourhood full of cool bars, cafes and boutiques

3. Shop for local delicacies from the food halls and markets

4. Take a daytrip to Porvoo, Finland’s second oldest city

5. Try one of the neighbourhood saunas in the city
Finnish Lapland is immense – as the fells begin to rise around you in every direction, you will find serenity unlike anywhere else on earth. In Finnish folklore, an element of mystery is associated with Lapland, the country’s northernmost province. Experience the spirituality of Lapland and you will never be the same.
There are many scenic places in the world, but not so many would bring such warmth to your spirit. Lapland is one of them.

MENGYIN, CHINA
Wonderful memories of my wedding in Lapland on 12–12–12 in such a beautiful, natural and unspoilt place. Magical.

IAN, SPAIN
Top 5 things to do in Lapland

1. EXPERIENCE THE WILDERNESS OF EXTREMES FROM TWILIGHT TO THE NIGHTLESS NIGHT

2. DOZE OFF UNDER THE NORTHERN LIGHTS IN A GLASS IGLOO

3. GO ON NO ORDINARY WINTER’S RIDE WITH HUSKIES OR REINDEER

4. HAVE YOU EVER SENT A LETTER TO SANTA? NOW YOU CAN HOP ON HIS LAP AND TELL HIM IN PERSON

5. THROW YOURSELF INTO THE LOCAL LIFE AMID THE POWER OF NATURE AND GET TO KNOW THE SAMI CULTURE
Among the most important birthplaces of the Finnish identity are the deep green forests, the rolling hills and the glittering lakes that cover most of central Finland. Most of Finland’s summer cottages are in this region.
It is the countryside that dispenses true Nordic beauty. ... it resembles Narnia.

CHRIS, DAILY MAIL
A lake cruise with a boat sailing from south to north, sleeping and eating on board with daily stops in a different town/village. Unforgettable experience.

GABRIELLA, ITALY
Lake Saimaa – One of the Greatest Lakes in the World
RUTH, THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Top 5 things to do in Lakeland

1. RENT A COTTAGE IN FINLAND’S MOST IDYLLIC SETTING

2. SPOT THE ENDANGERED FRESHWATER SEAL

3. PHOTOGRAPH BEARS IN THEIR NATURAL SETTING – AT NIGHT

4. FORAGE FOR BERRIES AND MUSHROOMS

5. VISIT THE SAVONLINNA OPERA FESTIVAL
Off Finland’s west coast lies one of the country’s most beautiful and unique tourist destinations. Shaped by the Ice Age, the Turku archipelago consists of over 20,000 islands and islets. The area boasts old wooden towns, historic manors and stone churches, lighthouses and ferries bridging islands together.
Sipping an ice-cold lager, I watch the sunset cast a gentle pink glow across broken clouds with the Gulf of Bothnia crashing relentlessly on the rocks in the background, and I finally see Finland showing off its talents with nothing to defy my perception. It is a phenomenal haven.

JAMIE, BEDFORD TODAY
Top 5 things to do in Coast and Archipelago

1. Go island hopping by bicycle in the world’s most beautiful archipelago from Turku to the Åland Islands

2. Go sea kayaking among 20,000 islands and skerries

3. Spend a night on a lighthouse island (Utö, Bengtskär)

4. Catch the biggest pike & perch in the archipelago

5. Dive & discover underwater trails in the archipelago National Park
Finland features great contrasts.

2013 extremes

COLDEST DAY | WARMEST DAY
-39.7°C / -39.5°F | 32.4°C / 90.3°F
Summer days in Finland when the night arrives late. You can stay outside, talk with your friends, listen to the silence, and the day just keeps going on. I was cycling with my friend at midnight and we didn’t need bike lights at all. It was really amazing.

ARNAUD, FRANCE

Summer
Temperature: +15°C – +25°C
What I think is very traditional Finnish is staying in a summer cottage on the lake, having a sauna and being whipped with birch branches. I was very shocked the first time someone did this to me. Haha, crazy locals!

GRANT, AUSTRALIA
I remember the biting midges, fresh berries, fresh green peas in the pod, forest mushrooms and grilled vendace. And, of course, crayfish, washed down with Finnish vodka. Brief season but big party time.

DAVID, UK

Autumn
Temperature: 0°C – +10°C
Nowhere else in the world does autumn colour come with quite such range.

ANDREW, THE FINANCIAL TIMES
The smell of fresh snow is magic. I miss winter most of all seasons. Having lived in the UK for 5 years now, I can say that my ideal weekend now would include snow, sauna, lake and some Northern Lights.

MARJUKKA, FINLAND
My partner, Hugh, and I exchanged informal vows in Finland: lit Finnish tar candles, exchanged rings of Finnish gold and saw the Northern Lights on the night of our little ceremony.

JAN, AUSTRALIA

Finland, I forgive you for being so cold!
Please let me return!

CLÁUDIA, PORTUGAL
Spring

Temperature: 0°C – +10°C
A breath of pure, fresh air, a mouthful of surprisingly delectable flavours, an exquisitely comfortable bed in the beautiful hotel and a friendly, helpful warm welcome. We loved Finland and can’t wait to return. Kiitos!

SHERRY, FRANCE
Themes
– What to do here?
Cultural Beat

A country for those who are culturally inclined.
The Finnish capital has seemingly come from nowhere to become the hottest place for food lovers in Scandinavia.
Finland means spectacular nature, stunning design, splendid music, superb education and some delightful people!

PEG, USA

Helsinki, a design lover’s paradise.

NORMAN, THE GUARDIAN

FINNISH FORM
Silence, please

Tips to reclaim your inner peace.
Could there be anything more satisfying than spending time and relaxing in a summer cottage, watching dozens of different types of butterflies fluttering around in the sunshine, taking repeated saunas and jumping into your own little ‘piece of Finland’?

MICHAEL, SCOTLAND
Clean cold air, sparkling white snow, dancing green light, walking endless trails with a warm heart full of love and a happy soul.

EVA, GERMANY

I went to see some lakes and rivers and I felt complete just looking at them and how they wash away all the bad feelings. The peace, the tranquillity of Finland is only there.

VALENTINA, ITALY
Wild & Free

How to get your adrenaline pumping?
I rock up to Lapland with one thing in mind: action. I’ve got a tick-list of things to try: there’s adrenaline-fuelled snowmobiling through the countryside, ice karting – think kamikaze go-karting – plus skiing and snowboarding on the guaranteed powder between November and April.

CATHY, TNT MAGAZINE
We’ve had perfectly organised four days in Lapland. Snow mobiling, ice fishing, snowshoe walking, husky safari, skiing... And lots of fun. That all provided with perfect service.

STEFAN, GERMANY
Dive deeper into the Finnish mindset at VisitFinland.com