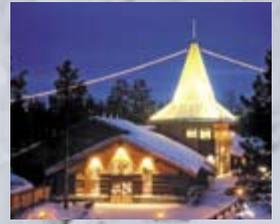


Winter in Finland

THE ULTIMATE SNOW ADVENTURE



Snow®

Welcome to our winter wonderland



If you're ready for a winter holiday that will leave you with a lifetime's worth of memories, then you're ready for Finland. We are proud to share our majestic snow covered landscapes, our magical forests and our glorious northern nature with you. There is nowhere in the world where you can enjoy such a wide variety of thrilling winter activities, while never being more than a walk from absolute tranquillity. With so much to see and do, we're sure you'll be happy our snowy winter lasts so long. We wish you an amazing stay in the land of Santa Claus, where Northern Lights shine and snow always sparkles. Welcome to Finland!



2008

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TRAVELLING TO AND THROUGH FINLAND

Finland may be in the most northerly corner of Europe, but it is easy to reach. As well as Finnair, which flies non-stop from cities across Europe, Asia and North America, many other airlines fly to Helsinki–Vantaa International Airport. Alternatively, you can take your own car on one of the many ferries that cross the Baltic from Sweden, Germany and Estonia, or catch a train to Helsinki from Russia. Below is a list of potential airlines and ferry companies.

Airlines

- Finnair, www.finnair.com
- British Airways, www.ba.com
- Ryanair, www.ryanair.com
- SAS/Blue1, www.blue1.com

Ferry companies

- Viking Line (via Sweden), www.vikingline.fi
- Silja Line (via Sweden), www.siljaline.fi
- DFDS (via Sweden or Norway), www.dfds.com
- Nordic Jet Line (via Estonia), www-eng.njl.fi
- Tallink (via Estonia), www.tallink.com
- Tallink Superfast (via Germany), www.superfast.com

Once you have arrived, you can travel in speed and comfort on Finland's extensive train and bus network or take a plane to one of more than twenty domestic airports. A modern road network reaching even the remotest areas makes driving a pleasure, too.



Facts about Finland



Small population, big country

The total area of Finland is 338,000 sq. km (130,500 sq. miles), stretching 1,160 km (721 miles) from north to south and 540 km (336 miles) from east to west. It has only 5.2 million inhabitants, making it one of the least densely populated countries in Europe.

Land of a thousand lakes

Finland is known as the land of a thousand lakes. In fact, it has many more, 187,888 lakes to be exact. It also has 5,100 rapids and 179,584 islands, as well as on its south-western coast the largest and arguably the most beautiful archipelago in Europe. In winter the lakes ice over enabling people to enjoy a wealth of activities like skiing, skating and even ice fishing!

A capital where east meets west

Helsinki, a gateway to the east and west, has a population of about 560,000. If you include the entire metropolitan area, it's more than a million people in total.

Languages spoken

Over 90 percent of Finns are Finnish speakers, nearly 6 percent consider Swedish as their mother tongue, while 1,700 Sàmi speak the Sàmi language. The majority of Finns also speak English, while other European languages such as German are reasonably well understood.

Money matters

Finland uses the euro. If you need to exchange foreign currency, you can either visit a currency exchange office or a bank, which are open 9:15 am to 4:15 pm, Monday to Friday. Major credit cards are also accepted in most places. Cash machines are very common throughout the country and in resorts too.

A winter wonderland

In northern and eastern Finland, snow is guaranteed every winter for many months. The average temperature for the coldest month, January, is -3°C in southern Finland and -15°C in Lapland, but it's not unusual for it to drop below -30°C . The south and coastal regions are generally warmer. Yet no matter where you are, the dry climate means that even very low temperatures aren't too harsh and in fact, when wrapped up warm, are pretty enjoyable.

The long blue months

The northernmost part of Finland sits above the Arctic Circle, which means that it enjoys a long period of kaamos. Kaamos is a Finnish word for the mysterious bluish blend of darkness and twilight that is unique to the Nordic winter.

Dark winter days

In mid-winter, December and January, the days are short all over Finland and the sun is very low on the horizon, even at midday. By mid-April it is sunny for 14 to 15 hours in southern Finland and 16 hours in northern Finland, allowing hours and hours of winter sports under the brilliant sun. All Finnish ski centres offer illuminated cross-country tracks and downhill slopes.

Awe inspiring Northern Lights

The Northern Lights, or Aurora Borealis, are a light phenomenon that occurs in the Arctic sky on clear, dark nights. This amazing spectacle is caused by solar winds interacting with the earth's magnetic field. The best times to see them are from September to October and from February to March. They are most common in the Kilpisjärvi region of Lapland, although it's virtually impossible to predict their arrival. This makes their appearance all the more magical.

The snowy months

Normally by mid-December, in southern and central Finland, the ground is blanketed with snow, which can last until early April. In the north the snow usually falls around the start of December and can sometimes still be around in May.





A long ski season

The skiing season in southern and central Finland usually lasts from mid December to the start of April, with the peak season being from February to March. In northern Finland, it's even longer sometimes lasting all the way from early December to early May, with the peak season usually lasting from mid-February to April.



Be sure to wrap up warm

To fully enjoy the magical experience of the frozen, snowy North, be sure to bring plenty of warm clothing. To protect yourself against the changing temperatures it's always best to dress in layers. During the winter months, you can always hire thermal over clothing from resorts.

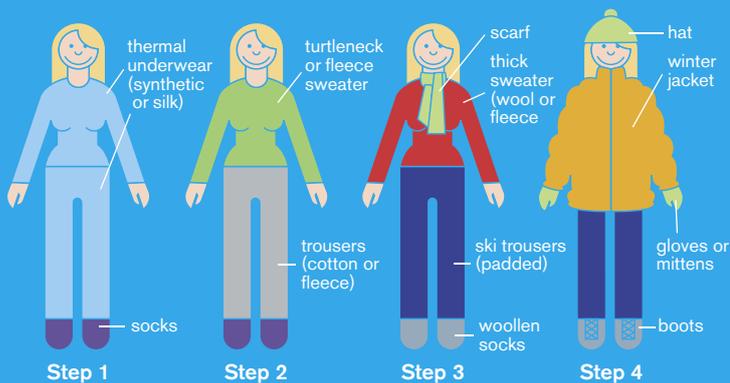
Food for all tastes

If you are looking to try Finnish specialties, look out for traditional dishes. These include stews, pies and pastries that differ from region to region. The Finnish forests provide a wealth of fresh berries and mushrooms, while the lakes provide particularly tasty fish such as salmon. If you make it to the north then reindeer stew with lingonberries is a must. As well as Finnish food you can find everything from pizza to Chinese. There is of course a host of gourmet restaurants, too.

Driving a car

If you are contemplating driving, remember Finns drive on the right. Generally, the speed limit in urban areas is 40–60 kph, and 100 kph on motorways. Look out for road signs for exact figures. There are no road tolls, but all vehicles must use headlights at all times of the day regardless of weather conditions. All passengers must wear a seat belt, too.

How to dress for snow fun



Keep an eye out for elk and reindeer

Finland has an abundance of elk, and every now and then they cross roads, sometimes catching drivers unawares. The same applies to reindeer in Lapland. Warning signs showing the approximate lengths of the danger zones are posted in high-risk areas, but regardless of such warnings, it is always best to be alert when driving outside urban areas.

Sampling the sauna

In Finland, the fact there is one sauna for every three people highlights how important a part of the culture it is. Many regard the sauna as the best way in the world to relax. In many log cabins and hotels you can hire a private sauna. Alternatively, you can visit a public one. In these men and women have separate saunas, but a sauna oven heats them all. To increase the sauna's humidity, you throw water on stones that sit on top of the stove. The ideal way to end the experience is with a cooling shower or swim.

The home of architectural excellence

Finland has a proud history of producing some of the world's most respected architects. Alvar Aalto, Eliel Saarinen and Reima Pietilä are the most admired. Finnish neoclassicism of the early 19th century, the National Romanticism of the turn of the century, the Functionalism of the 1930s and the Modernism of the 1960s are all widely respected.

Art and design at its best

Finnish design is admired the world over for its clarity of form, natural materials and fresh colours. Brands such as Iittala, Artek or Marimekko maintain this tradition, while Finnish jewellery makers such as Kalevala Koru are inspired by Iron Age jewellery.

A shopping paradise

If you fancy making the most of the many shops you'll find, they are mostly open from 9 am to 6 pm Monday to Friday and from 9 am to 4 pm on Saturdays. Department stores and shopping malls are usually open from 9 am to 8 pm or 9 pm Monday to Friday and until 6 pm on Saturdays. During the weeks before Christmas, department stores are sometimes open on Sundays too.

A souvenir for everyone

Finnish designed products make ideal gifts. For glassware and ceramics, check out manufacturers such as Arabia or Iittala. Jewellery by Kalevala Koru or Lapponia and wooden figures by Aarikka also make wonderful presents. If you want some colourful clothing, look out for Marimekko and Luhta. Other treats include canned game, jellies made from Finnish berries, and Finnish handicrafts.



Winter holiday areas and resorts



Winter holiday resorts

	Page in the brochure	Cross-country skiing					Downhill skiing															
		Maintained trails km	Trails for skating-style skiing km	Lighted trails km	Equipment rental	Ski school	Trail café	Season starts	Season ends	Number of slopes	Lighted slopes	Max. vertical drop m	Longest slope m	Half-pipe/Street	Snow park	Number of lifts	Lift capacity (person/hour)	Day pass (2007) eur	Equipment rental	Ski school	Slope restaurant	Slope café
Lapland																						
Enontekiö	18	200	131	24	•		Nov 1	May 15														
Saariselkä-Inari	19	230	130	34	•	•	Nov 15	May 10	11	5	180	1300	•	•	5	6500	30	•	•	•	•	
Muonio (Olos/Pallas)	20	250	250	50	•	•	Oct 30	May 1	10/9	1/1	210/340	1400/2400	•		4/2	4500/2000	24	•	•	•	•	
Levi	21	230	230	28	•	•	Oct 25	May 11	44	15	325	2500	•	•	27	27900	32	•	•	•	•	
Ylläs	22	330	330	38	•	•	Nov 1	May 4	60	28	463	3000	•	•	30	32340	31	•	•	•	•	
Pyhä-Luosto	23	170	153	40	•	•	Oct 27	May 6	17	11	280	1800	•	•	10	8000	30	•	•	•	•	
Salla	24	110	110	37	•	•	Nov 15	May 1	15	11	230	1300	•	•	5	5000	28	•	•	•	•	
Posio	24	70	25	25	•		Dec	Apr	3	2	110	1000			1	800	21			•	•	
Suomu	25	70	62	17	•	•	Nov 30	May 1	10	2	240	1600			4	4200	28	•	•	•	•	
Rovaniemi	26	100	100	50	•	•	Nov 20	Apr 20	7	7	140	600	•		4	3300	25	•	•	•	•	
Ruka-Kuusamo	27	506	202	34	•	•	Oct	June	29	24	201	1300	•	•	19	22500	32	•	•	•	•	
Kemi	28	320	220	57	•	•	Nov 1	Apr 20	1	1	50	300	•	•	1		14	•	•		•	
The Lake District																						
Kajaani Region	29	202	225	30	•	•	Nov 15	Apr 23	13	8	174	1100	•		8	10400	30	•	•	•	•	
North Karelia	30	60	42	42	•	•	Nov 6	Apr 20	12	7	230	1500	•	•	6	7200	26	•	•	•	•	
Kuopio Region	31	400	35	40	•	•	Dec	Apr	18	7	140	1050	•		14	1200	17	•	•	•	•	
Tahko	31	65	65	16	•	•	Dec	Apr	23	8	200	1200	•		14	15000	28	•	•	•	•	
Jyväskylä Region / Himos	32	290	105	25	•	•	Dec	March	21	21	151	950	•		13	16520	31	•	•	•	•	
Southern Finland																						
Lahti, Messilä	33	60	60	30	•	•	Dec	March	10	10	111	800	•		10	9000	29	•	•	•	•	
Helsinki	34	30	27	25	•	•																

Skiing seasons in Finland

CENTRAL FINLAND / HIMOS

Skiing season Dec – March			
	Average temperature	Average snow level	Daylight hours
Nov 15	-1.5	5 cm	7h00'
Dec 15	-6.6	22 cm	5h30'
Jan 15	-10.5	38 cm	6h30'
Feb 15	-9.4	53 cm	9h09'
March 15	-3.7	55 cm	12h06'
April 15	1.9	19 cm	15h03'

EASTERN FINLAND / TAHKO

Skiing season Nov 15 – April 15			
	Average temperature	Average snow level	Daylight hours
Nov 15	-2.3	4 cm	6h55'
Dec 15	-6.9	22 cm	4h52'
Jan 15	-9.4	38 cm	5h50'
Feb 15	-9.5	52 cm	8h46'
March 15	-4.2	54 cm	11h40'
April 15	1.3	26 cm	14h51'

RUKA-KUUSAMO & KAJAANI REGION

Skiing season Oct 21 – May 18			
	Average temperature	Average snow level	Daylight hours
Nov 15	-6.2	15 cm	6h00'
Dec 15	-11.5	30 cm	3h00'
Jan 15	-14.2	50 cm	5h00'
Feb 15	-12.8	68 cm	8h40'
March 15	-8.2	74 cm	12h06'
April 15	-2.2	66 cm	15h30'

LAPLAND / ROVANIEMI

Skiing season Nov 15 – May 1			
	Average temperature	Average snow level	Daylight hours
Nov 15	-5.9	14 cm	5h35'
Dec 15	-10.6	29 cm	3h21'
Jan 15	-12.8	42 cm	4h34'
Feb 15	-11.4	57 cm	8h05'
March 15	-7.0	62 cm	11h34'
April 15	-1.1	54 cm	15h40'

LAPLAND / LEVI

Skiing season Nov 1 – May 11			
	Average temperature	Average snow level	Daylight hours
Nov 15	-6.9	10 cm	5h10'
Dec 15	-11.2	40 cm	0h00'
Jan 15	-13.6	50 cm	3h30'
Feb 15	-13	75 cm	8h10'
March 15	-8.3	75 cm	11h20'
April 15	-2.1	50 cm	16h10'
May 15	4.4	10 cm	24h00'

LAPLAND / SAARISELKÄ

Skiing season Nov 15 – May 10			
	Average temperature	Average snow level	Daylight hours
Nov 15	-7.4	14 cm	4h20'
Dec 15	-12.3	32 cm	0h00'
Jan 15	-14.3	47 cm	2h30'
Feb 15	-13	62 cm	7h56'
March 15	-8.2	65 cm	11h30'
April 15	-2.2	54 cm	16h30'
May 15	4.4	15 cm	24h00'

A wealth of winter activities



Up for the cross-country challenge?

If you're looking for a wonderful way to keep fit and enjoy the beautiful snow covered Finnish landscape, have a go at cross-country skiing. One of Finland's most popular sports, you'll find tens of thousands of trails crisscrossing the country. Free to all, there are routes for all levels, from families to thrill seekers. You can even adventure long into the night, by taking one of the many illuminated trails.

In southern and central Finland the peak season runs from February to March, while in Lapland the best part of the year is from March to April. In Kilpisjärvi, the north-western corner of Lapland, the season extends well into May. If you're a beginner, you can get lessons and hire equipment from all the main ski centres. Once you're ready, be prepared to enjoy majestic pine forests and spectacular arctic hills in a manner you'll never forget.



Doing it downhill!

The tranquillity, amazing views and incredible spring light combine to make downhill skiing in Finland very special. With a wide selection of slopes, well-lit evening runs and a wealth of after ski entertainment, it's hardly surprising it attracts enthusiasts from all over the world. There are ski resorts scattered across the entire country. Regardless of whether you visit the north, central and of southern regions you will be spoilt for choice.

What's more, the ski season in Lapland and northern Finland usually lasts from early December sometimes all the way to until May. In central Finland, it tends to begin in mid December and often lasts until April, while in the south you can normally ski from mid December to early April. Regardless of when you choose to visit, all levels of experience are catered for. If you're a beginner, you can develop your skills with daily ski instruction available at all the main ski centres. There you can also hire skis, poles, boots and helmets. In no time at all you'll be doing it downhill.

Super snowboarding

If snowboarding is more your style, you're in for a treat. Many resorts not only have half-pipes but also snowboard streets with jumps and rails. Expert instructors are available at most resorts for those who are eager to sample the thrills of snowboarding but yet to have a go. For real daredevils, many ski schools even include free style and ski acrobatics in their programmes.

In Lapland and northern Finland, the season usually lasts from early December sometimes all the way to until May. In central Finland, it normally begins in mid December and lasts until April, while in the south you can often snowboard from mid December to early April. Just like skiing, you can normally hire the equipment needed for a day's snowboarding.

Get graceful on ice

There is nothing quite like skating across an ice covered lake. In Finland, you have quite literally hundreds of thousands to choose from, as well as many indoor and outdoor rinks. Long-distance skating allows you to glide gracefully across the vast expanses of glittering ice while marvelling at the snow-covered landscape. As a family adventure, it's simply unforgettable. Even though it's normally safe to take to the ice alone, a guided skating trip can help you to get even more from the experience. Equipment is easy to hire and depending upon the weather conditions, the skating season might begin at the end of October and last until March or April.

If you'd rather watch, you can visit Kuopio in central Finland. Every winter it plays host to The Finland Ice Marathon where the world's best marathon skaters gather on Lake Kallavesi's natural ice track to compete. Launched in 1984, as well as the large audience, it attracts thousands of recreational skaters so there is plenty of opportunity to join in.

A cruise with a difference

For a very unique type of cruise, why not hop aboard Sampo, one of the world's only tourist icebreakers. After thirty years patrolling the Arctic waters, the vessel now carries ice adventurers from the middle of December until mid April. The excursion starts with an exciting snowmobile ride to the ship. Once onboard, you can try swimming in a waterproof thermal suit among the broken ice or just admire the frozen Arctic landscape in the winter darkness with northern lights shimmering overhead. Whichever you choose, you'll be guaranteed a truly memorable experience.





Daring dog sled safaris

A husky drawn sledge is not only one of the most traditional ways to travel through the snow-covered wilds, it is also one of the most exciting. These specially bred dogs can reach incredible speeds over even the hardest, deepest snow. If you're up for this challenge, the safari operators will provide you with thermal suits and footwear and even teach you to drive a dog team. What's more, you'll get a unique insight into the daily life of these friendly, hard working dogs. In an hour or two, the distance you can cover is quite incredible, and if you want to go longer, dogsled safaris can be specially tailored to meet your needs.



Snowshoe walks in the wild

If you want to have unrestricted access to the great snowy outdoors, there is no better way than to go snowshoe walking. With no trails required, you can go where your heart desires. After a brief introductory session, the snowshoes, which resemble giant tennis rackets, are easy to use and can be easily taken along wherever you go. To make your walking even more effective exercise, you could even have a go at Nordic Snowshoeing and use poles. In either case, you're sure to have a brilliant day out.

Riding with reindeers

In Finland childhood dreams really do come true. Imagine what it would be like to finally have the chance to ride in a reindeer's sleigh, bells ringing as you glide across the winter wonderland. If you're interested in finding out more about reindeers, you can even visit a reindeer farm. There you can hear stories about reindeer herding in Finnish Lapland and learn how to harness the reindeer to the sleigh, before setting off on a safari you'll never forget.

Feel the thrill of the snowmobile

If you feel the need for speed, then the fastest way to check out Finland's winter wonderland is by snowmobile. Enjoy the thrill of a speeding snowmobile



as it glides over snowdrifts and frozen lakes. Snowmobiles are good fun — and with the help of an experienced guide, surprisingly easy to operate. The snowmobile safari ranges from short spins for beginners to expeditions to the longest safaris, which can stretch hundreds of kilometres. The full complement of gear and instructions provided by the safari organiser ensures your safety. But remember not to drink drive and stick to the marked routes.

Making the most of the snow and ice

Have you ever thought how difficult it would be to try and build something out of snow and ice? Well, in Finland it's an art form. In Kakslauttanan and Lainio there are glass and ice igloos as well as an ice bar. If you want to see some more of the incredible structures that can be created visit the SnowCastle at Kemi. There you can stay in a snow hotel, eat in a snow restaurants and get married in a snow chapel. To sample the perfect contrast between hot and cold, they've even managed to create a snow sauna!

Wishing for ice fishing?

If so, you've come to the right place. Ice fishing, involves dangling a line through a hole in the ice and hoping for good luck. Make sure you wrap up warm, pack enough supplies and get yourself an ice drill, an ice-angling rod-and-reel and a stool. With hundreds of thousands of lakes and a long the frozen coastline, you're spoilt for choice when it comes to locations.

If things go well, you might hook a pike, perch, whitefish or burbot. And even if you don't catch anything nice, at least you'll get an ice tan. If you'd rather learn from a professional, guided fishing excursions are available and on some you even get the chance to cook up what you catch.



Welcome to the home of Christmas



When most people think of Christmas, they dream of thick snow, open log fires, Santa Claus and reindeer. In Finland, people don't dream this. They live it. More than anywhere in the world, Finland is the home of Christmas.

Letters to Santa

Everyone knows that Santa Claus, or Joulupukki in Finnish, lives in Lapland, the part of Finland mainly located above the Arctic Circle. This is why, when you write a letter to him, it usually ends up at his own post office in Rovaniemi. Hardly surprising when you consider that it's the world's only Santa Post Office.

Meet Santa at SantaPark

Finnish Lapland is also home to the world's first SantaPark. In a cave built deep inside the Syväsenvaara fell near Rovaniemi, you will have the opportunity to personally meet Santa, his elves and reindeers. Santa can also often be found at Santa Claus Village and in many other parts of Lapland too.

Snow words

Snow, a crucial part of the Christmas experience, covers most of Finland for at least four months of the year. This probably explains why the Finnish language has so many different verbs for different kinds of snowfalls: "pyryttää" (the snow swirls down in large amounts), "tuiskuaa" (the snow whirls about), "tupruttaa" (the snow blows about in gusts).



Keeping the Christmas peace

In accordance with an ancient tradition, the mayor of the city of Turku in southwest Finland publicly proclaims the beginning of Christmas peace at midday on Christmas Eve. The message is broadcast to the whole nation on radio and television. The tradition of announcing peace over Christmastime is an old Nordic custom, which probably dates from the Middle Ages. In pre-Christian days there were as many as 27 different “times of peace” in the course of a year, including time dedicated for women, court sessions and harvesting. To this day, the idea of peace remains present in the Finnish greeting “Peaceful Christmas”.

The delights of Christmas dinner

In Finland, Christmas dinner is enjoyed on Christmas Eve and is the most important traditional meal of the year. Families with children very often have their meal before the arrival of Santa Claus, while adults wait patiently to eat later in the evening.

The most important seasonal Finnish food is Christmas ham. From the 18th century onwards this has been served with turnip and potato casseroles. Earlier the Christmas Eve meal also included stockfish and rice porridge, but as people have grown wealthier the Christmas table has changed. In some homes ham has been replaced by turkey, while gravlax, pickled herring, roe, vegetable salads and cold cuts are often served as hors d'oeuvres.

No Finnish Christmas is complete without pastries, including gingerbread and prune-filled puff pastry pies. Making a gingerbread house is a much-loved pastime for Finnish children.

Santa's visit

The highlight of Christmas in families with children is undoubtedly the arrival of Santa Claus. All the children know he lives in Finnish Lapland, although most of the time he's to be found in his workshop in Rovaniemi.

With a knock on the door, the children's long wait is finally rewarded: Santa Claus arrives with his presents. He has come all the way from Lapland in his sledge drawn by reindeer, though the children fully understand that he might have had to leave the reindeer a few kilometres away because of the traffic. Even though Santa might not reach each and every house, presents are always given out on Christmas Eve.





A time to remember

Finnish people remember their departed family and friends on Christmas Eve by placing lighted candles on their graves. The rows and rows of candles on the graves of the war dead are a particularly moving sight.

Going to church is another Christmas tradition. Midnight services on the Eve and early-morning services on Christmas Day are the most common forms of observance.

In Finland, Christmas Day is a quiet occasion when family and relations get together. The celebration of Boxing Day is more public. In the past Boxing Day was an occasion when the young people of the family were allowed to go out for a Boxing Day sleigh ride.

Lucia Day

The pre-Christmas celebrations of Swedish-speaking Finns culminate in the Lucia festival, which originated in Sweden. Lucia day is celebrated on December 13th when the Lucia maiden, selected by Finland's main Swedish-language newspaper, Hufvudstadsbladet, makes her appearance on the steps of Helsinki's Lutheran Cathedral.





Festive cheer for the New Year

With Christmas over, the wait for the New Year begins. At midnight of New Year's Eve, the mayor of Helsinki wishes the townspeople a happy New Year from the steps of the Cathedral. People launch fireworks and rockets can be seen exploding all across the night sky.

If you're in a restaurant or bar, it will be full of partygoers seeing in the New Year. Glasses of champagne are raised everywhere. But the most important tradition of all is tossing molten tin into a container of water. By studying the shape it creates, you can try and predict your future.

Christmas visitors from everywhere

Many Finnish hotels, spas, resorts and farmhouses construct the perfect Finnish Christmas complete with churches, sleigh rides, Christmas fare, Santa Claus and saunas. From Great Britain alone hundreds of charter flights arrive in Lapland every Christmas and groups come from all over the world. The best way to find the Finnish Christmas atmosphere is by purchasing a Christmas holiday package for a destination of your choice.

The sights, sounds and smells of Christmas are already evident at the end of November. Christmas shopping streets open with appropriate pomp, Christmas lights and candles are lit, ice lanterns are built and Christmas carols ring out. Helsinki's own traditional Christmas street is Aleksanterinkatu, beautifully decorated with lights.

Christmas markets are an excellent way to enjoy the seasonal atmosphere in Helsinki and Turku. The traditional markets are worth a visit not only because of the variety of high-quality local products on offer but also their beautiful historic settings.



Saariselkä-Inari – winter paradise in the wilderness



For a truly unforgettable winter holiday experience, there are few places that beat the northernmost part of the European Union. Situated in the heart of the fells, near Urho Kekkonen National Park, the pristine wilderness makes Saariselkä a must for adventure seekers. With the snowy season lasting from October until May, there is plenty of time to go winter activity crazy. Whether you are looking for cross-country or downhill skiing, ice fishing, or husky, reindeer and snowmobile safaris, look no further than Saariselkä.

The resort itself has 8 hotels, a spa, cabins and apartments as well as 19 restaurants. What's more, the Tankavaara Gold Village is only 30 kilometres from Saariselkä, while the Siida Sámi Museum and Northern Lapland Nature Centre in Inari is just 70 kilometres away.

www.saariselka.fi, www.northernmosteurope.com

Don't miss:

Siida, Sámi Museum and Northern Lapland Nature Centre, www.siida.fi

Tankavaara Gold Village, www.tankavaara.fi

Koilliskaira Visitor Centre, www.outdoors.fi

Northernmost Europe -exhibition in Siula-house, www.saariselka.fi

Action Park is a new place for speedsters, www.actionpark.fi

Longest toboggan run in Finland



Levi – so many ways to enjoy easy days

LAPLAND

Levi is an amazing resort with a huge variety of world-class accommodation and activities for everyone. As well as being host to the Alpine Skiing world cup, it celebrates all that is special about the Lappish culture. It has an outstanding selection of ski slopes, which are ideal for skiers of any level, though particularly suited to families and children. And if the kids want to play, then Kids' Land has a whole range of entertainment to keep them happy.

For adults, there is a massive range of options off the slope too, from horseback riding to snowmobile safaris, reindeer farm visits and ice fishing. When it comes to food and entertainment after a hard day's adventuring, Levi has plenty of places for both. Add to that a wide selection of shops, six hotels and Kittilä Airport, only 15 minutes away, and you have a recipe for a great holiday.

www.levi.fi



Don't miss:

Lainio Snow Village, www.snowvillage.fi

Saamen Kammi (traditional lappish restaurant), www.k5levi.fi

Reidar's Paradise (Särestöniemi-museo), www.sarestoniemenmuseo.fi

Levi World Cup in Alpine Skiing
10.–11.11.2007, www.worldcuplevi.com

Arctic Hot Air Ballooning,
<http://www.hot-air-balloon-adventure.com/home-e.html>

Sammun Tupa Reindeer farm,
www.sammuntupa.fi



Ylläs – freedom in the Seven Fells



For a holiday destination that combines Lappish charm with breathtaking natural beauty, make your way to Ylläs. With seven fells and two original Lappish villages, it is a real joy. At 718 metres, Ylläs fell itself is one of the highest fells in Finnish Lapland. What's more, it's got a massive 60 slopes and 330 kilometres of ski-trails, 38 kilometres of which are illuminated. Even though it's the biggest winter holiday resort in Finland, there is plenty of space to enjoy a moment of peace and quiet.



Ylläs is also ideal for snowy adventures like husky, reindeer, Icelandic pony or snowmobile safaris. If you want something more tranquil, then why not try snowshoe hiking, kick sledging or ice fishing. The Snow Village is also a wonderful day out for the whole family.

www.yllas.fi

Did you know...?

Ylläs is home to the longest downhill runs in Finland. It's also one of the most popular destinations among telemark skiers and off-piste skiers who love the wealth of untouched snow.



Don't miss:

Pallas-Yllästunturi National Park,
www.luontoon.fi/pallas-yllastunturi

Hotel Ylläs Saaga with Spa,
www.yllassaaga.com

Lapp Village for visit Santa Claus, www.lappvillage.fi

Snow Village, www.snowvillage.fi

Trailriding in Lapland, www.lapinvaellushevokset.fi

Santa's Animal Park, www.konijanka.fi



Pyhä-Luosto – the jewels of Lapland

Pyhä and Luosto are two separate ski resorts in the middle of Lapland, only 90 minutes from Rovaniemi airport. At Pyhä and Luosto, you'll find an astonishing selection of activities to keep you busy. With a variety of quality ski slopes, cross-country ski trails and organized adventures, your holiday will be filled with action. What's more, the snow stays from December until early May, meaning you'll have plenty of time to sample Pyhä's safe yet challenging slopes or Luosto's more gentle options.

If you want to take a break from skiing, you can always visit husky and reindeer parks, or travel through the snow-covered landscape by snowmobile or sled. The Lampivaara amethyst mine is close by, too, and after unearthing your own amethyst you can relax in the Amethyst spa. For the perfect finish to the day, spend the night admiring Northern Lights through the window of your room at the world's first Northern Lights theme hotel.

www.laplandpyhaluosto.fi



Don't miss:

Pyhä-Luosto National Park, www.laplandpyhaluosto.fi

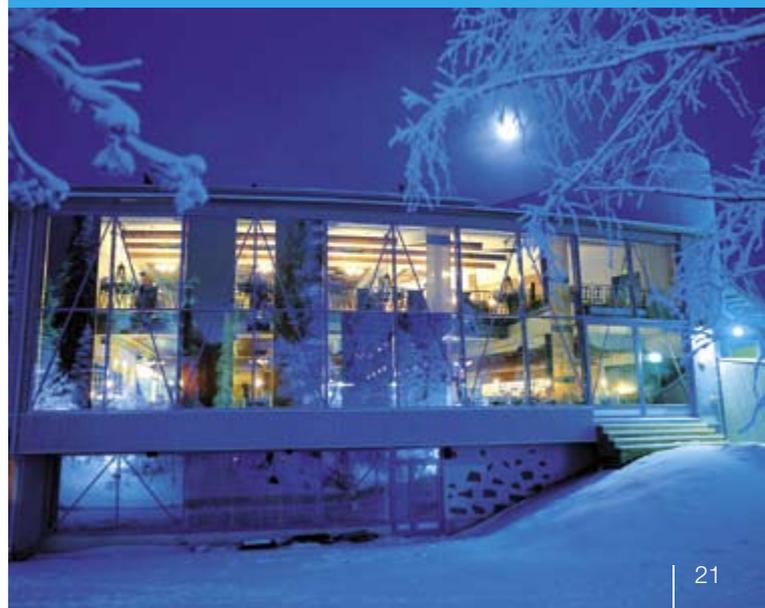
Amethyst Mine, www.amethystmine.fi

Pyhä-Luosto Husky and Reindeer Park,
www.huskysafaris.com

Luosto Reindeer Park, www.laplandpyhaluosto.fi

Luostola's Horse Farm,
www.luostolahorsefarm.com

Amethyst Spa, www.luostotunturi.com



LAPLAND



Rovaniemi – the heart of Lapland Finland

Wintertime in Rovaniemi is something you'll never forget. The capital city of Finnish Lapland is home to Santa Claus and the Santa Claus Village. Covered with sparkling snow, it is a magnet for winter sports people from all over the world. Cross-country ski trails abound, and the Ounasvaara Ski Resort, offering downhill skiing and snowboarding, is so close you can see it from the city centre. There are also lots of opportunities to go snowmobiling, to try your hand at dog sledding or go cruising in a reindeer sleigh. After an active day outdoors, you can relax in a traditional Finnish smoke sauna or a peat bath at the Ounasvaara spa complex, Santasport.

www.rovaniemi.fi/tourism

Don't miss:

Arktikum, www.arktikum.fi

Santa Claus Village, www.santaclausvillage.info

Santa Claus Office, www.santaclauslive.com

Christmas Exhibition – Christmas House,
www.christmashouse.fi

SantaPark, www.santapark.com

Ranua Wildlife Park, www.ranuazoo.com

Ounasvaara, www.ounasvaara.fi





LAPLAND

Ruka-Kuusamo – a host of happy faces

Ruka-Kuusamo is located within an area of outstanding natural beauty. This wilderness is just south of the Arctic Circle and close to the Russian border. The Kuusamo area offers the discerning tourist a dazzling array of winter holiday activities. Ruka in Kuusamo is one of Finland's most prominent ski centres. It has 28 slopes, a mogul course for skiers as well as a FIS-standard super pipe and a snowboarding street with jumps and rails. On top of this, there are 500 kilometres of ski trails for all levels and tastes, forty kilometres of which are illuminated. Hardly surprising then it's so popular with Finns and foreigners alike. And if this isn't enough to keep you busy, there is a huge choice of thrilling reindeer, husky and snowmobile safaris that allow you to enjoy the stunning wilderness. All in all, a winning formula for the entire family.

www.ruka.fi



Don't miss:

Oulanka National Park Visitor Centre, Kiutaköngäs, Juuma Rapids, www.outdoors.fi

Holiday Club, Kuusamon Tropiikki Spa, www.holidayclub.fi

Hannu's Footsteps Photography Centre

Pentik Centre in Posio, northernmost ceramic factory in the world, www.pentik.com

Border crossing point to Russia for the daytrips



Kemi-Tornio Region – Lapland by the sea



For the people of Lapland, snow is part of everyday life for almost half a year. The people in Kemi, a small town on the Northern coast of the Gulf of Bothnia, however, have a very special relationship with it. Every year for the past decade, they have built a SnowCastle, home to the SnowRestaurant and the SnowHotel. Decorated with snow and ice sculptures, if you stay the night you'll have to snuggle up in a sleeping bag as the room temperature is a crisp -5°C . It also boasts a sauna with a difference, too. You've guessed it: the walls are made of snow!

For a special type of cruise, why not jump aboard the Sampo Icebreaker. It sets sail from the middle of December to the end of April, crushing ice up to eight metres thick. The climax of the four-hour journey is swimming in the ice in a flotation suit. A chilled out experience you'll remember for the rest of your life. This is just one of the many exciting winter adventures you can experience in seaside Lapland.

www.meri-lappi.fi, www.sea-lapland.com



Don't miss:

The Sampo Icebreaker, www.sampotours.com

The SnowCastle, www.snowcastle.net

Simo Old Vicarage, www.wanhapappila.com

Gem Gallery, www.kemi.fi/matkailu



Helsinki – where east meets west

SOUTHERN FINLAND

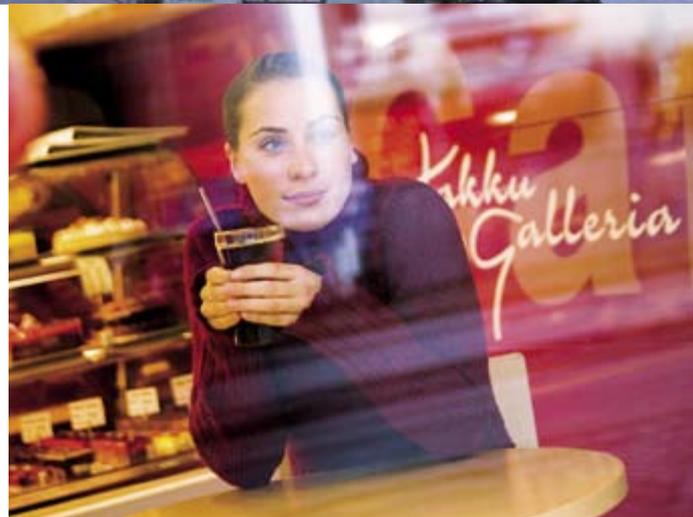


Welcome to Helsinki, where Eastern exotica meets Scandinavian chic and where leisurely days meet vivacious nights. When you visit Helsinki, you will find a city of alluring contrasts, a vibrant but intimate European capital with a dynamic urban area surrounded by unspoiled nature and beautiful sea. Just as Helsinki cannot be described in one word, neither can it be experienced in just one way. Helsinki really does have something for everyone.

Helsinki is captivating during winter. Packed with boutiques, galleries and museums, some of the best-designed products anywhere in the world are found here. The Design District in the neighbourhood around Diana-puisto Park is home to countless design, decorating and antique shops. You'll also find a wealth of clothing and jewellery boutiques as well as restaurants and lots more. Helsinki also has the widest range of shops in Finland and hosts Christmas Markets throughout December. To find out more go to www.visithelsinki.fi

If you're a food lover, you'll find the city a gastronomic delight. From Michelin-starred haute cuisine to old-world Russian flavours, Helsinki has it all. HelsinkiMenu restaurants offer special, seasonal dishes made of Finnish ingredients. These recipes interpret Finnish food traditions in new and exciting ways. The menu varies according to restaurant and season. When the sun goes down, the city comes to life with bars and clubs open until the early hours.

Helsinki is also a haven for people who enjoy culture. In fact, winter is the busiest time of year for cultural events, with big names from all over the world performing. If you fancy doing some outdoor activities, then it's easy to hire skates, snowshoes or skies. For those who enjoy a chilly thrill, ice swimming is an option too. A more relaxing activity is to take a walk along the shoreline and across the frozen sea to the Uunisaari Island café. In the evening a warm sauna is a perfect way to relax the body and soul. To find out more about sauna and ice swimming, go to www.visithelsinki.fi



Don't miss:

Korkeasaari Zoo, Best Winter Experience 2006 in Helsinki, www.korkeasaari.fi

Cathedral and Senate Square, www.visithelsinki.fi

Uspenski Orthodox Cathedral, www.visithelsinki.fi

Suomenlinna Maritime Fortress, www.suomenlinna.fi

National Museum of Finland, www.nba.fi

Ateneum Art Museum, www.ateneum.fi

Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, www.kiasma.fi

Sea Life Helsinki, www.sealife.fi

Ice Park Helsinki, www.jaapuisto.fi

City Sightseeing & Helsinki Card, www.helsinkiexpert.fi

The Design District, www.designdistrict.fi



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www.tallinksilja.com
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